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# CLARE ABBEY;

OR, THE

TRIALS OF YOUTH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# CLARE ABBEY;

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## THE TRIALS OF YOUTH.

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### CHAPTER I.

He had (if 'twere not nature's boon), an art  
Of fixing memory in another's heart.

LARA.

How each at home o'errates his misery,  
And thinks that all are musical abroad,  
Unfetter'd as the winds, while only he  
Of all the glad and licenced world is awed.

GONDIBERT.

THE new year dawned, and in Camilla's opinion began well, for it brought a little novelty with it.

One morning Reginald entered the drawing-room earlier than was usual to him, and asked Camilla to walk with him.

"I want to go as high as the white stone on that hill," he said, pointing through one of the vistas to a sloping hill that sloped almost into the park. "Do you think you can walk as far?"

VOL. II.

B

"Can I! my dear Reginald," she exclaimed, laughing, but a little offended; "I am not quite a cripple yet."

"Miss Vincent said yesterday," he observed, with a smile and a slight tone of sarcasm in his voice, "that she was so very easily knocked up; I thought, perhaps, she had taught you to be the same."

"I don't ask Miss Vincent to teach me anything," she replied, petulantly. Then as if for some reason afraid of the subject, she hurried on; "I should like to walk with you very much, but what do you wish to see on the hill?"

"It is rather strange that we should have lived here all our lives, without ever having the curiosity to ask the meaning of that white stone. I was told by a traveller the other day, that it is not *a* stone, but a circle of stones, and that they are generally supposed to be Druids' stones."

"That is what I always say," Camilla said, laughing; "it is impossible to feel any great curiosity about a thing one sees every day. But now you have stirred me up; I

should like extremely to see some Druids' stones. I shall be ready in half a second—" and as, with her many faults, she was not a dawdle, it was but a few seconds before she appeared.

They set off in silence. Camilla was expecting an attack on Miss Vincent, and was preparing herself to defend her. She had felt much anxiety respecting Reginald's opinion of her new friend, for, though her feeling for her did not amount to affection, her society had become indispensable. Miss Vincent had spent some hours with her on the previous day, and Reginald had met her at luncheon; but as yet he had made no comment. She had not appeared to advantage; seeing with quickness the peculiarities of Reginald's character, and anxious to please, she had endeavoured to adapt herself to his taste; but she had overdone it; and though perfectly able to talk to a sensible man, had she allowed herself to talk naturally, she had, by affecting sentiments not her own, and propounding questions she did not understand, in plain words, made a fool of

herself. Camilla had been aware of it, and had felt uneasy; but, from Reginald's silence, had supposed and hoped that the weaknesses of her friend had escaped his observation. His remark this morning had proved it to be otherwise, and she set off expecting to be attacked, and prepared for resistance.

"You do not ask me, Camilla, what I think of your Arabella," Reginald said, laying his hand smilingly on her arm, after they had proceeded some distance in silence.

"Miss Vincent's name is not Arabella," she replied, shortly.

"I thought all young ladies' confidants were called Arabella or Aramintha. What is her name?"

"A very simple name and rather a pretty one, — Sophia."

"It should not be Sophia," Reginald said, shaking his head.

"Why? I rather like Sophia."

"Sophia means wisdom; and it is not appropriate to Miss Vincent."

"If Sophia does mean wisdom, it is *very* appropriate, Reginald. Miss Vincent is ex-

tremely clever, and . . . . I hate the word accomplished ; but she knows almost everything in the world. I mean, she knows something about everything ; it is impossible to puzzle her."

"She may be clever and accomplished ; I don't know about that : but she is not wise."

"She is quite wise enough for me," Camilla said, petulantly ; "I don't like too much wisdom. Really, Reginald, if you had the ordering of the world, we should all be moped to death. We are pretty nearly moped to death as it is."

"What does Ernest De Grey think of Miss Vincent?" he inquired, after a moment's pause.

"I don't the least mind what Mr. De Grey thinks," she cried with increasing irritation. "I am sure I do not call him so very clever."

"I don't know whether he is clever or not," Reginald said, musingly ; "but he has one of those clear judgments which see more plainly than talent sees. I would take

his opinion of persons and things far before the opinion of many cleverer people."

"Then poor Miss Vincent is doubly condemned," Camilla said, laughing; for her ill-humour was never of long duration. "I asked him one day how he liked her; and he said, pretty shortly and pretty uncivilly, I thought, considering that she is my friend, 'Not at all!' But, Reginald," she continued resolutely, "I don't mean Mr. De Grey's opinion to influence me in the least; nor even yours, though I wish you liked her. I like Miss Vincent, and I like her to come and see me; and I can't give her up."

"I am sorry you like her, Camilla; I wish you had never made such a friend. I don't think she is a good one."

"Why, what harm has she done me?—can you say that she has done me any harm?"

"A little, perhaps. I don't want to find fault; I dare say she has not done much. But, Camilla, you have disappointed me. Don't think me unkind," he continued affectionately, "but I *had* thought that your taste was too true and too pure to be taken



by anything so worldly and so frivolous as Miss Vincent is. I don't wish you to neglect her, as an *acquaintance*; living, as she does, within your reach, it is perhaps right that you should receive and visit her; but, Camilla, you make a friend of her; you let her guide you and direct you; and yesterday—I did not wish to listen, but the words fell upon my ear—I heard her jest with you about Ernest De Grey; and I don't know that you encouraged her, but you allowed it."

"My dear Reginald!" she cried, blushing scarlet, and her eyes filling with tears, "I think you are rather severe with me. Miss Vincent says many things I don't like, and does many things I don't like, and if I could choose she is not the friend I would choose to have; but *can* I choose? My dear Reginald! I am not like you: I can't go about the world and find friends as I please; I must take what comes, or have none at all. Indeed, indeed, you don't know what a dull dreary life I lead when you are away, or you would pity me, and

be glad that I should have even Miss Vincent to interest me."

"I am perhaps severe," he said penitently, touched by the very unwonted sight of her tears. "Forgive me, Camilla, I did not mean to be so. My only wish is to see you bright, clear, and true, as you have always been in spite of your faults. If you feel that Miss Vincent does you no harm,—if she does not taint your mind and fill you with foolish fancies, I will say no more . . . But do not let her spoil you, Camilla."

"If Miss Vincent can spoil me," she replied smiling, "I am afraid I must be so worthless that there is no use in saving me. I don't care enough about her to be spoiled by anything she can say or do. I just like her,—that is all,—and she amuses me when I am dull. But, if it pleases you to hear it, I don't really like her half-a-quarter as much as *your* friend, Mr. De Grey."

Reginald looked at her with interest and curiosity, as he often did when she spoke of Ernest De Grey; and "I wish," just passed his lips, and was withdrawn again.

“What do you wish?” Camilla said, looking up with a slight blush: but at the moment they were beginning to ascend the steep part of the hill, and Camilla stumbled and was raised again by Reginald, and stumbled again and tore her gown, and the question was forgotten.

“There are the stones, Reginald,” she exclaimed, as they reached the top of a steep, stony bank; “and I think they really must be famous, for there is a stranger looking at them,—contemplating them I ought to say, for he looks very thoughtful.”

It was a young man seated on one of the stones, with his arms crossed and his eyes bent downward.

A few steps brought them closer to the stones and to him, and the sound of their footsteps, not of their voices, for they were silent, caused him to raise his eyes.

There was an immediate exclamation of “St Maur!” and the young man came forward to Reginald and held out his hand.

Camilla watched the meeting with curiosity, and was both surprised and sorry

to see the hauteur and coldness which Reginald's manner immediately assumed. She knew that she was more easily pleased than her brother, but it appeared to her that in this case he too might have been gracious. The young man was certainly both striking and pleasing-looking — very tall, and very dark, and very handsome so far as figure and feature went — and possessing one of those intelligently-serious countenances which even when serious disclose liveliness and animation beneath. An *experienced* observer might have discovered on his brow, and in his eye, a certain restlessness of expression, which troubled and clouded them; but this would scarcely have attracted the first glance even of the experienced, and Camilla would not have been singular in her hastily-formed opinion, that he looked much too clever and remarkable to be a common person.

Her favourable opinion was so strong that when after a few constrained questions and answers Reginald, still with hauteur in his manner, named her as his sister, she blushed and cast down her eyes beneath the quick

scrutinizing gaze, that seemed to search her through and through.

A strong desire to please is rarely felt where there is consciousness of superiority ; and Camilla, in her small intercourse with the world, had hitherto felt too conscious of giving pleasure to be troubled with any uneasy doubts on the subject. Some doubts, however, now she felt, and, therefore, some desire to please ; and it was with a feeling of gratification that she marked the change from the constrained voice in which Reginald was addressed, to the anxious, animated, though respectful tone which greeted her. She felt that she pleased, and was at her ease again.

“Are you staying in this neighbourhood?” Reginald asked, after a few moments of silence.

“Not staying — only travelling. I slept at Alverstoke last night, which I suppose is five or six miles from here ; and as I make a point of seeing everything within reach, I came this morning to examine these stones ; and this afternoon,” he stopped and

smiled, "I hope to catch a view of Clare Abbey."

Camilla looked at Reginald; and after a slight hesitation, he said, "We are going home immediately; if you have time to spare, I am sure my mother will be happy to see you at luncheon."

"I will not refuse your invitation," the young man replied, "because I have heard much of the beauties of the place; but I hope you do not suppose I was hinting for an invitation."

As Reginald made no reply, Camilla said, "Oh no; we shall be very happy if you will come."

He bowed and smiled, but quietly, and not as if he felt any peculiar degree of gratitude.

"Shall we go, Camilla?" asked her brother; and turning away, he held out his arm to her, as it seemed unconsciously, and as if from a desire to protect her.

She took it, but with a smile and a slight shake of her head, and her soliloquy was, "Poor Reginald! he takes too great care of



me. I really believe he would like to shut me up in a cage."

"After all," she cried, suddenly stopping as they moved away, "we have hardly looked at these stones, and they are very curious. Do wait a moment, Reginald. I wish I could fancy an old Druid standing by that large broken bit of rock.

Mr. Hargrave (for such was his name) smiled, and shook his head.

"Why do you shake your head?" she asked.

"Because I think it requires a very great stretch of imagination to believe that these really are Druid's stones. I came to see them, because I was told the tradition. But my belief is, that they are merely . . . ."

"Oh! don't say anything disagreeable," Camilla said, interrupting him. "I like to think they are Druid's stones; and it is so wild about here, I am sure they are quite in character."

"But do you like them to be called so, if the chances are ten to one that they are not so?"

"Yes, I do indeed. I don't like people to be so clever that they can believe nothing; and that is what we are coming to, I think. One can hardly open a book without having some of one's favourite stories proved to be false. But I won't be convinced. I can't bear these new discoveries."

"Then, I am sure," said Mr. Hargrave, bending upon her his piercing eyes, with a smile and an admiring gaze, "if anything I can say can add to the fame of these stones as old Druid's stones, it shall be said."

"But you do not believe that they are so yourself?"

"Oh yes," he said, smiling again. "Upon second thoughts, I think my explanation of their appearance was a foolish one. They *must* be Druid's stones."

"Shall we go, Camilla?" Reginald asked again: "it is getting late."

It was with a feeling almost of annoyance that he remarked how very lovely his sister was looking, her cheeks glowing, and her eyes sparkling with exercise and animation.

The descent was steep, stony, and slip-



pery, and little conversation took place ; but when they entered the gates of Clare Abbey, which stood at the very foot of the hill, Reginald's natural courteousness returned to him ; and though, perhaps unconsciously, retaining his hold of Camilla, he began to converse with less of stiffness, and more of friendliness.

"You are making a tour, then, of these counties?" he said, after some remark of Mr. Hargrave's.

"Yes—on foot. It is a mode of travelling that I particularly like."

"And alone?" Reginald inquired.

"Quite alone. I have not spoken to a friend or foe for a fortnight. You seem to be surprised."

"I was surprised, I own."

"And why?"

"I can hardly tell. It was my impression, I suppose, that you disliked solitude."

"It was an unjust impression. I am fond of society, I know ; but those who suppose I cannot be alone are as unjust as those who, because I am sometimes idle, suppose

I cannot be industrious." He spoke with a slight degree of pique or resentment.

"I beg your pardon," Reginald said, with his grave courtesy. "I know I am not famous for judging correctly of the characters of others."

"Pray, don't beg my pardon," his companion said, recovering himself. "If people will be inconsistent, they must, I suppose, expect to be misjudged. But I confess I am sometimes provoked by the judgments of the world—I don't mean in my own case only: it is the same with everybody. A particular point in a man's character is chosen, and from that a theory is formed, a plan laid out, cut and dried; and if any venture to transgress the limits of this plan, the victim is supposed to be taking leave of his senses. Whereas, in fact, every man is made up of a variety of characters; and those who are accused of inconsistency are only following one strong tendency for a time, to the neglect of another, which perhaps has had its turn. We could all make twenty theoretic men."

"I think you are partly right," Reginald said, thoughtfully. "I believe I am apt to look for too great consistency."

"*You* have a right to do it," his companion said, looking at him with a slight smile; "but few have the right. I am sure I have not."

"Are you so *very* inconsistent?" Camilla inquired, bending forward from the opposite side of her brother.

"I don't call it inconsistent," he replied, smiling; "I don't like to be called so. Sometimes one thing pleases me, and sometimes another, each in their turn; but that is my nature—there is no inconsistency in it."

"And solitude pleases you at this moment?"

"Yes; it has pleased me for a fortnight, and I think it will please me for a fortnight longer. I began my travels in a very misanthropical mood, disgusted with the world and everybody in the world. I am better now, and by the end of the month I expect to be quite well. But then," he added,

laughing, "it will be only to begin over again—first the disgust, and then the cure."

"You do not go back to Oxford, I believe?" Réginald inquired.

"No, I am glad and sorry to say so. I have had enough of it, and yet I regret it too."

"Are you only just leaving Oxford and already disgusted with the world?" Camilla said, leaning forward again; "I am sure I need not wish so much to see the world, if it pleases for such a very short time."

"What do you wish to see in the world?" he asked, and asked with another of those keen glances.

"I don't know the least," she replied, laughing, "a great deal new, and a great deal beautiful, and all exciting; but I think of it so vaguely, that I believe my fancies are more like fairy tales than reality. I *don't* expect to see the Queen sitting all day with her crown on her head, but a year or two ago I think I did."

"Then pray let nothing I have said destroy your hopes of happiness in the world."

It does weary some people, but I don't think it will weary you;—it all depends on the feelings we take with us. Besides, even for me, though it occasionally may disgust, does not solitude do the same?"

"That it certainly does," Camilla said warmly, "that is, I think it does when it is forced upon one, and when one feels shut up in a cage; but I don't think I should dislike it; I think I should rather like it if I were a man."

"Ah! Camilla," Reginald said with a slight smile, "you always lay your feelings to the charge of your position, not to yourself."

"Because, my dear Reginald, it is so. If I could go where I pleased, and see the beautiful scenery, and wonderful things, and great people I wish to see, I should be quite satisfied. I never should wish, I don't even wish as I now am, to live in a crowd. I don't like common tiresome people, and there must be a great many tiresome people in a crowd."

"There you are quite right," remarked Mr. Hargrave, "a crowd is the bane of

existence. One sees nothing, and one is nothing in a crowd. But then a crowd is not society. Do you remember what Byron calls it?"

"No, I am only *rather*, not *very*, fond of Lord Byron."

"Solitude;" and he repeated carelessly, yet with a peculiar beauty of recitation, some of the well-known lines.

"I think he spoke correctly," Reginald said, musingly; "I have often felt the same."

As they entered the garden, Reginald left his sister and hastened on to the house. He knew that his request for leave to bring Mr. Hargrave to luncheon would be granted without hesitation, but he would not ask him even to set foot in the house, till that permission was given. In some slight contrast to his opinions, his tone of mind was old-fashioned, and any degree of freedom or familiarity with his parents was revolting to him. Such deference may perhaps, like other virtues, have an excess, but it may be practised long before that excess is found.

Camilla guessed his object in leaving her,

and stood on the broad gravel walk at a little distance from the house, awaiting his return.

She had been talking easily till now—but on finding herself alone with Mr. Hargrave, the sensation of diffidence stole again over her mind. They stood in silence. She felt rather than saw that he was looking at her, and she was uneasy beneath his scrutiny. She wished he would speak, she wished to speak herself, but no subject would come at her call.

At length growing impatient, she glanced around her, and said, “Do you think it pretty?”

Few things could have been more simple or common-place; but she looked up blushing and shyly as she broke the silence.

“Very pretty, indeed—and I never saw anything like it before, which in my opinion is great praise.”

He said no more; and Camilla, easy as it might have seemed, finding herself unable to raise a fresh subject, was silent also. Another pause followed, and to her it was a very awkward one.



Her companion broke it at last: "What do you say to those stiff pine-trees?" he asked, pointing to the tall firs which stood on the verge of the terrace. "In my misanthropical moods they would suit me well; for they would hide the world from my view: but in my other moods,—better or worse, I don't know which to call them,—I am afraid I should look upon them as enemies. Do you ever feel a wish to cut them down?"

"Yes," Camilla said, laughing, "very often, but for no good reason; only because I always wish to make a change."

"I think," he continued, "I should look upon them as stiff stern sentinels, placed by stiff stern guardians, to guard, like the cherubims with flaming swords, the world from my view; and the sense of restraint would make me rebel and wish to escape from their control."

"You have made an allegory of them," Camilla replied; "but I don't much like it. It will make me melancholy to look at them now."

"Shall I make another allegory, then?" he



said, smiling. "They are not stiff, stern sentinels guarding the world from your view, but they are watchful friends, pointing to the world beyond; and in the glimpses they give in the present, foretelling how bright the future will be. See," he added, after a moment, suddenly, "see how the bright sunshine is creeping over that distant mountain!"

"But it is very distant," Camilla said laughing, and blushing she hardly knew why.

"Not so very distant; at some time or other the great world comes near to us all, and as we are, so our world will be. Yours, I should think, will be as bright as that sunny mountain."

"I hope it will; but I really don't know what I am talking of. It is very unlikely that the great world, as you call it, should ever come near me."

"Not utterly impossible, I hope," he said, bending his gaze with an earnest expression upon her as he spoke. "On that great world I should very much like to meet you again."

She cast down her eyes, blushed deeply,

even trembled, and made no further attempt to carry on the conversation. They stood for a few minutes more in silence, then slowly walked on till Reginald appeared from the house. His father had simply nodded his head in acquiescence to his request, but his mother had detained him with some questions as to the propriety of improving her dress for her guest, and he had been absent more than ten minutes. To his anxious mind they seemed more like hours than minutes; and he glanced uneasily at his sister and her companion as they silently approached, but, apparently, his scrutiny satisfied him, for his manner increased in courtesy as he invited Mr. Hargrave to enter the house.

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Mr. and Mrs. Hervey and Ernest De Grey dined at Clare Abbey on the same evening. There were no other guests. Mr. Hargrave had remained for one hour only. Neither Lord nor Lady Vere would have dreamed of inviting him to stay at the Abbey, and

Reginald, satisfied with the civility he had been enabled to show, made no further request, nor in fact desired to do so. If Camilla's feelings were different, she said nothing. If with something of anxiety and hope she watched her brother when the time of departure came, she made no request or comment. The new acquaintances parted like chance acquaintances, and his name was scarcely mentioned again.

"Who was your friend, Reginald?" Lady Vere did exert herself to say, as she sat in the drawing-room before dinner, awaiting her guests; and Reginald's answer was,

"Frank Hargrave his name is, mother. I knew him at Oxford; but he is no *friend* of mine."

"I thought he was your friend, as you brought him home. Do you like my new silk, Camilla?" And Camilla's opened eager eyes, closed with disappointment at this conclusion to the conversation.

The dinner was more than commonly stiff and silent; for Lord Vere, in addition to his usual mental ailments, had for the first

time a slight attack of gout, and his annoyance under the infliction was seen and felt, though not expressed.

At the conclusion of dinner he declared his intention of returning to his own room. Unaccustomed to assistance, and disdaining it, he rose from his seat without support; but, unaccustomed also to pain, he winced as he stood upright. Reginald, ever watchful, was by his side in an instant, and held out his arm. Lord Vere looked doubtful, and drew himself stiffly up; but apparently Reginald's countenance, raised to his own, conquered him; for, turning with a cold and silent bow to Ernest and Mr. Hervey, he accepted his son's proffered assistance, and they left the room together.

Ernest and Mr. Hervey proceeded to the drawing-room. Lady Vere, seated on the sofa, was smiling placidly as usual beneath Mrs. Hervey's tales. Camilla also was in her usual place, at a little distance from the sofa, before a table littered with books; but not as usual was her countenance or her smile. If occasionally, in her long and

lonely days, gloom and ill-humour stole over her brow, it was but rarely so—never when Reginald was at home—never on occasions such as the present—never for many minutes in duration; but this night she was unlike herself: it was evidently no common disturbance that clouded her eyes, and hung round her sweet smiling lips.

Ernest had watched her during dinner with intense interest, and it was with intense interest that he approached her now.

“Is anything the matter this evening?” he said, standing by the table, and bending towards her. “I am sure there is. I am afraid you are not well.”

“Not well?” she said, laughing. “What *can* make you so fanciful? I don’t know what it is to be ill.”

“I can’t help being fanciful: you don’t look the least like yourself this evening. I am sure something is the matter. If you are not ill, I am afraid you have been worried or annoyed, and I am very sorry to think so.”

He spoke very kindly and very anxiously,

but with an endeavour to restrain the extreme curiosity and anxiety he really felt.

The disturbance of Camilla's mind was still more evident in her manner than in her countenance; for to his anxious inquiries she replied petulantly, and even contemptuously,

“ I believe, Mr. De Grey, you are one of those who wish people to be always alike, always pleased and cheerful; but I don't wish it myself. I like variety. How is it possible for any one to be always the same ? ”

It was a faint echo from the morning's conversation; for her mind was at this time in that soft and malleable state, that everything as it passed over her left its impression behind.

“ I am afraid you will think me very tame and insipid if I say so,” Ernest replied, a little gravely,—for he was both puzzled by and hurt at her manner; “ but I do like people to be always the same. I don't mean stupidly and unmeaningly so; but I don't like clouds, and storms, and disturbances in



the air. If they are sent, we must submit to them ; but when they are of our own causing, I don't like them. If I could, I would always see sunshine."

"So would I," she said, looking up suddenly ; "if I could, I would always have sunshine ; but when the sunshine is absent," and she smiled and shook her head, "what can there be but clouds?"

"Did you find the sun hot to-day?" inquired Mr. Hervey. "Your brother was telling me that you walked for a considerable distance."

Camilla looked at Ernest with an amused smile before she replied, and reassured by the confidence of her expression, and feeling that whatever might be the cause of her disturbance, she was not offended with *him*, he drew a chair to the table, and sat down beside her.

Mr. Hervey placed himself between the two detachments, in the position most calculated to obtain the greatest quantity of information, but a little nearer to Camilla than to Lady Vere ; since it might be ima-

gined that in her conversation there would probably be more of novelty than could be collected from the narrations of his mother.

"What a beautiful book!" Ernest exclaimed, taking one from the table. "It is a new one, is it not?"

"Reginald gave it to me on New Year's Day."

"Do you approve of the practice of New Year's gifts, Miss St. Maur?" inquired Mr. Hervey.

"Oh yes, of course I do, and of Christmas-boxes, and birth-day presents besides."

"And wedding gifts, I conclude?"

"Oh yes," she replied, smiling, "wedding gifts too, when they are necessary."

"Here are some verses," Ernest said, looking up from the book he had been examining (a collection of poems from various authors, illustrated with designs of unusual beauty). "Here are some verses rather strangely appropriate to what we were talking of just now. They are called 'The Gladness of Life.' Have you read them?"

"No," Camilla said, glancing at the book;



“at least I don’t remember them. Will you read them to me?—not that I shall agree with them, I am sure.”

“Shall I read them?” and Ernest glanced at Lady Vere.

“Oh, yes! mamma will like it. Mamma, you would like Mr. De Grey to read some verses, should n’t you?”

“It will give me great pleasure,” she replied, with a polite bow to Ernest.

He read, and read well, the following verses. Every verse was illustrated by a quaint and appropriate design, placed side by side with the verse on the page:

#### THE GLADNESS OF LIFE.

So variously are all things wrought,  
I marvell’d how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought.

---

TENNYSON.

Happy the young who haste away  
Ere life her page unfold,  
Ere they have bow’d with Passion’s sway,  
Or shrank from Sorrow’s cold.

And happy those who linger yet  
The steep ascent to climb;  
For treasures lie like jewels set  
Upon the breast of Time.

Happy the glad, for theirs is Love,  
And theirs are light-wing'd hours ;  
And pure the heart that springs above  
From earth's unfolding flowers.

And happy those to whom forlorn  
A drearier lot is given :  
For Crowns of Thorns in patience worn,  
Are Crowns of Light in heaven.

Happy the pure, whose footsteps tread,  
Unharm'd, temptation's strife ;  
The dews of heaven rest on their head,  
And bless their angel life.

And happy those who turn again,  
Their long, long wanderings past ;  
For though the way be full of pain,  
Pardon is won at last.

Happy the rich—for to their hands  
A gracious power is lent,  
To fall, as rain bedews the lands,  
Where'er their steps are bent.

And happy even those who need,—  
The toiling and the poor ;—  
For such a path as now they tread,  
Their Master trod before.

Where'er we turn, may joy be found,  
Will we but seek it deep ;  
Though frost lies cold upon the ground,  
Beneath the flower roots sleep.

“What a quantity of verses all about the same thing,” exclaimed Lady Vere, when Ernest's melodious voice ceased to read.

"But they mean different things," said Mrs. Hervey, sagely.

"Who is the author of the poem?" inquired Mr. Hervey; "I think I have heard something like it before."

"The author," Ernest said, glancing at the index with a smile, "is that person whom I used to suppose was known by the name of Mr. Anon."

"Anonymous, I conclude?" inquiringly.

"Of course, Mr. Hervey," Camilla cried; "what else could Mr. De Grey mean?"

"Oh! I supposed him to mean anonymous."

"But do you like the verses, Mr. De Grey?" Camilla said, the cloud stealing over her brow again. "I don't like them at all."

"Yes I like them," he said, thoughtfully, and watching her with interest, "because I think it is what we ought to feel. It is an idea that has haunted me all my life long; and I am sure the better we become, the more we should feel it and like it."

"Then I must be very bad," she said,

petulantly, "for I don't like it at all. I don't understand even what it means," she continued, sadly. "How can it ever be equally happy to us to have our wishes or to be miserable?"

"It *is* difficult to understand. Pray don't think that *I* understand it, for I don't. I only say I like the idea, and I think we *should* understand and feel it, and . . . . I wish I could."

"I wonder what Reginald would say," she said, as her brother entered the room; "it is just the kind of sad idea he likes. Reginald," she called, "we want you to read some verses out of that pretty book you gave me; and we want you to explain them to us, for we can none of us understand what they mean."

"I beg your pardon, Miss St. Maur," Mr. Hervey said, a little offended, "I thought the verses were perfectly clear. They meant to express, as Shakspeare says, that there is good in everything."

"Oh yes! Mr. Hervey, we know that," she said, impatiently; "we did not mean

that kind of understanding. But we want to know whether you like them, Reginald, and whether you ever could feel that they speak the truth?"

He read them attentively, then shook his head. "No, Camilla," he said, "I feel like you, I don't understand them; and, more than this, I don't think I wish to understand them. The idea does not please me. I like that verse," pointing to the second, "but not the others. Listen to these lines," he said, turning over two or three pages; "I like these better; they express more my feeling of life." And, with a rising colour, he read the following lines from a poem on "Duty:"

Oft where she leads thy blood must mark thy footsteps;  
Oft where she leads, thy head must bear the storm,  
And thy shrunk form endure heat, cold, and hunger;  
But she will guide thee up to noble heights,  
Which he who gains, seems native of the sky,  
While earthly things lie stretch'd beneath his feet,  
Diminish'd, shrunk, and valueless.

"No, Reginald, no," Camilla said, shaking her head sadly; "that does not please me either. I like it better than Mr. De Grey's

poem, because it gives pain its proper name, but still it speaks as if pain were pleasing. Give me the book, and let me see if I can find something I like. Will you read this, Mr. De Grey, — ‘The Sadness of Life?’ Perhaps that will express what I feel.” She placed the book before Ernest, and he read again :

THE SADNESS OF LIFE.

For violets pluck’d, the sweetest showers  
Can ne’er make grow again.

OLD BALLAD.

The new-born day is fresh and fair,  
The balmy breezes fan the air,  
The flowers look up, the sun to greet;  
The sky smiles down, their love to meet.  
All, all is bright—yet still we say,  
Where is the bloom of yesterday?

The rose that decks thy garden bower,  
Although it be a lovely flower,  
Is not the same that blest thine eyes  
When June last spread her laughing skies.  
And ere another sun be set,  
Another parting must be met.

The latter days of Job were blest,  
Joys fell in showers upon his breast,  
His home to deck, his cares to wile,  
Young daughters came with beauty’s smile;  
But where were they whose early grace,  
First made his home a pleasant place?

Oh! life, this is the saddening thought  
With which thy dearest joys are fraught;  
Though day by day, new hopes arise,  
The eyes they bless are tearful eyes.  
We own to-morrow may be bright,  
But still 'twill be *To-morrow's* light.

He looked at her with an inquiring smile, as he ceased, but she drew the book from before him, and closed it with some impatience.

“You read as if you liked the verses, Mr. De Grey. I don't. They might do for a very old man. I dare say a hundred years to come I shall think of them with pleasure; but if youth is to be as melancholy as that, I think we had better not live. I like to think of the past, but I don't regret it at all. The sadness of life is in the future—to look on and on, and see *nothing* that can give one pleasure.” A faint colour passed over her cheek as she spoke, and she rose suddenly from her seat and went to the pianoforte.

Ernest looked after her wonderingly and anxiously, and, rapt in his intense curiosity, Reginald addressed him twice in vain.



On observing this distraction, a slight smile passed over the lips of the latter, and immediately turning away, and bestowing his attention on Mr. Hervey, he left Ernest to himself.

The next moment Ernest had followed Camilla. He placed himself in the window near which the pianoforte stood, and intently watched her countenance as, languidly and uninterestedly, she played a long and difficult piece of music, for which her mother had asked. The moment it was over, he said,

“Is it possible that life wears such sad colours to your eyes? You never used to speak as you do to-night.”

“Because I never used to think,” she replied.

“And what has made you think now?” he asked, with extreme interest.

His question seemed to make her thoughtful: her hand wandered idly over the keys, and she did not reply to him.

He did not dare to repeat his question, and they remained silent.

After a few moments she recovered herself, and continued the conversation.

“Don’t you think life is full of disappointment? It seems to me that very few people have what they wish. Do *you* have what you wish?”

“Perhaps not,” he replied, gravely. Consciousness of sympathy with her present expression of feeling kept him for an instant silent; but after a short pause, he continued: “But still, though I own it may be so, I cannot look on life in such a very sad light. If it is full of trial and struggle, is it not chiefly our own fault, because we set our minds on things beyond our reach and beyond our merit? And if disappointment comes, is it not almost necessary? If we had all our wishes, should we not be selfish, earth-bound . . . .?”

He thought he was answering and consoling her; but he was in fact preaching to himself, and to feelings at the moment too powerful within him.

She interrupted him with tears in her eyes, a sight he never had seen before.

“Oh, Mr. De Grey, don’t—pray, don’t! When I am happy, I dare say it is right to say such hard things—but not to-night. You ought to have told me that some day my wishes will be fulfilled—that some day I shall be as happy as I wish to be.”

“You will, you surely will,” he said, earnestly; the teacher forgotten, his whole being ready to go forth to give or promise her happiness.

“It seems as if it must be so,” she answered, musingly. “It seems as if such great desires, such a thirst for happiness, could not have been planted in us if it were not to be fulfilled. It seems as if we should not have been allowed to dream such bright dreams, unless at some time they were to be realized.”

“What are your dreams?—what is it you wish?” There was an agony of interest in his countenance and his tone.

“I wish . . .” She paused,—“I hardly know—I cannot say what I do wish; but I know I feel there must be much more in

life than I have ever felt, a happiness greater than I have ever dreamed of. And yet it seems beyond my reach—it makes me melancholy to think of it—it makes me sad and wretched, instead of happy, as it should do.” She paused again, then raised her face to his: “And, what are *your* dreams?” she inquired; and this night there was simple curiosity in her questions—not a shade of that childish and coquettish spirit which occasionally had marked them.

“My dreams would be more easily told than yours,” he replied, in a low voice, averting his eyes from her lifted face, which looked very lovely in its imaginative sadness.

A moment afterwards, as if to resist a strong temptation, he moved to the other side of the pianoforte, and having examined her music, gave her a song with a smile, and seated himself at a distance. She looked after him as if pondering,—then with more than usual feeling, began “The Song of the Olden Time.” But the song was a

safe one, its tone of pensive memory acting as an antidote to the more vivid thoughts and hopes that were agitating Ernest's mind, and when it was over he had recovered himself.

## CHAPTER II.

When he speaks

The air, a charter'd libertine, is still,  
And the mute wonder lurketh in man's ears  
To steal his sweet and honey'd sentences.

KING HENRY THE FIFTH.

Blessings beforehand—ties of gratefulness,  
The sound of glory ringing in our ears,  
Without our shame, within our consciences,  
Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears.  
Yet all these fences and their whole array,  
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.

GEORGE HERBERT.

What a single word can do,  
Making life seem all untrue.

MARY BARTON.

THE months of the winter and the spring passed away, and the beginning of June found Camilla on the eve of leaving her home for the first time. The depression which a complication of feelings had caused, had very swiftly passed away — and her thoughts, which for a time had gone forth too

anxiously and vehemently into the future, had soon returned to occupy themselves with the present. During these months, Reginald was continually coming and going; and his short absences, and constant and unexpected returns, together with her continued intercourse with Miss Vincent, prevented her from sinking into weariness. Her mind and feelings, which had been in a state of progress, appeared to stand still, and all things to have returned to the calm and equable flow, and childish enjoyments of the previous year.

Reginald meanwhile, having taken leave of Oxford, was preparing himself to enter upon life. These months were devoted by him to intense study—not the study of books, but man. He was endeavouring to supply by observation,—observation ardent and intent, as were all the exercises of his intellect,—that lack of experience and practical knowledge of which he was conscious. With special ardour and interest, he was also devoting himself to the study of oratory. He felt stirring within him



those breathing thoughts which *must* communicate themselves; he was conscious of possessing the gift of those burning words which *can* communicate them; but he knew himself to be wanting in the knowledge of those rules of art and prudence, without which the loftiest genius may fail to make itself heard. To this knowledge he applied himself. Day after day he sat in that Assembly of which ere long he hoped to be a member, neither nameless nor insignificant; day after day, not only when eloquence might be heard, but during the longest and dullest debates; watchful, observant,—gathering alike from failure and from success, the wisdom and experience for which he sought. There he learned where the flowers of rhetoric pall upon the hearers; there, where the multitude of words oppress rather than convince,—there he learned the majesty of truth, the weight of character, the might of temper, the wisdom of forbearance, and how these things bear away the palm, from the loftiest flights of thought which possess them not. Day after day his young and

stately form was observed to enter and take his accustomed seat ; hour after hour his beautiful countenance, so pure and glowing, that it was described as being all spirit, to bend forward in absorbed, entranced attention,—and many were the eyes that watched him, and many the prophecies that were made, of the brilliancy of the career that lay before him. Many too, in his purer and brighter image, recalling a long-forgotten name, invaded the seclusion of Lord Vere with kindly remembrance, and friendly congratulation ; and the heart of the father began to beat again with something of the hope and fire of youth—and an ambition, it may be faulty still, yet of a purer kind than that which animated his early day, began to go forth upon the beaten path of the world. No word was said—little notice was taken of these invasions of his solitude ; but the gloomy solitude was peopled again—the dull uninterested eye was raised again—and again with a kindling glance he began to survey the distant theatre he had forsaken.

It was during one of Reginald's longest absences, that an invitation arrived for Camilla to spend a fortnight with Mr. and Mrs. Vincent at the seaside. Mrs. Vincent wrote kindly and pressingly. Mr. Vincent, she said, was out of health, and change of air and scene had been ordered; she had determined therefore to remove to a beautiful place, about thirty miles from Clare Abbey. She apologized for the little amusement or inducement she could offer—the time of year precluding the hope of much society—but she had so often heard Miss St. Maur express a wish to see the sea, that she could not let the opportunity pass without attempting to persuade her to take advantage of it. She concluded by assuring Lady Vere, that as much care should be taken of Camilla as if she were her own daughter.

Nothing could be kinder or more respectful than the letter—nothing, however, more certain than that the invitation ought to have been refused.

But Camilla was in rapture, and not unnaturally so; her opening mind was glowing

with the desire to *see* — her vivid imagination to realize some of the scenes and sights of beauty she was unceasingly picturing; she made therefore an earnest petition, and with little difficulty it was granted by both her parents.

That Reginald's view of the matter would be different, she did not then pause to consider; but his grave and displeased countenance when he heard of the invitation and its acceptance smote her to the heart. A year ago, and this would have been sufficient; a year before and his will and pleasure would have been hers also; but his influence was no longer her sole guide. She loved him as much as ever, she admired and revered him still more; but her intercourse with Miss Vincent had not been entirely without effect. While Reginald's character was rising and perfecting itself, hers was in a slight degree deteriorating. She could no longer follow him in the lofty flights of his mind; she no longer shared in his best desires. The very advance of his character,—the change from dreaminess to practice,—

the deepened seriousness of his mind, chilled her. She was thirsting, for she knew not what—vague visionary happiness—beauty, poetry, sympathy—an ideal Paradise ;—and, more often than once had been, she allowed herself to say that Reginald was too severe, and more and more often the wish for freedom was in her heart, and the picture of freedom before her eyes.

His displeasure, therefore, though it pained her, did not overcome her will.

“My dear Reginald,” she said, in answer to some of his remonstrances, “I wish you liked Miss Vincent better ; you would, if you knew her more. You really are unjust. She is not at all so bad as you think. She is a great deal better than I am in many ways—a great deal more religious. I could tell you a great many good things she says and thinks.” Seeing that this assurance made little impression on Reginald’s mind ; she continued : “you are prejudiced, Reginald ; and you ought not to be prejudiced—you of all people ought not to be prejudiced.

I am sure I have read very often that a great man is never prejudiced."

"I am not a great man, Camilla, I wish I were; but even if I were, I am not sure that you are right. There are some things one feels so instinctively, that one has not time to reason upon them; but though they look like prejudices, they are very correct judgments. I certainly know too little of Miss Vincent to be able to give you very definite reasons for my dislike. I may do her some injustice: but whatever she may be in herself, I feel that she is not improving you Camilla, and I am sorry, very sorry, to see this friendship increase. Besides," he continued after a moment, and his manner assumed an air of haughtiness and contempt, "who are these Vincents; and why should you associate with them so familiarly?"

A "besides," in argument, is always fatal to conviction, and especially so when a low motive follows a high one. Reginald's opinion, even in its pride, was certainly correct. However estimable the Vincents might have



been, they belonged to a different class ; their tone of mind and manner was different, and Camilla, unguarded by other protectors, was too young to mix with them without danger. But what he might have said with force was spoken from haughtiness, and his cause was weakened by it.

As an opinion, Camilla would have agreed with him, but not in practice when her will and fancy were concerned.

“ Ah ! Reginald,” she said, shaking her head at him with a smile—“ Pride, Pride and Prejudice.”

“ Perhaps I am too proud, Camilla,” he said, with a sigh, conscious immediately of the questionable motive that had prompted his words ; “ and if proud, perhaps prejudiced also. I think I am right in this case ; but if you think otherwise, I will say no more, and will not worry you with remonstrances you do not like. Only, dear Camilla, be upon your guard ; you may go into new, and, therefore, dangerous society ; do not let Miss Vincent tempt you to anything



which your own pure taste and clear judgment condemn."

"Oh, Reginald ! I will . . ." she paused. "I will give it up," was upon her lips, but before the words could be said, there came dancing before her such fascinating images of rugged rocks and dashing waves, of moonlight on the waters and romantic adventures, that the sacrifice was too much for her, and the better impulse evaporated in vague, though very sincere, words. "I will, Reginald, I will indeed," she exclaimed, warmly, "and you need not be afraid, for I don't like Miss Vincent's ways any more than you do. I wish I pleased you better," she continued sadly, distressed at having resisted him. "I wish I never did anything you dislike. I wish I was more like you. I don't know how it is, but I think as you get better I get worse, and I don't know what will be the end of it. Oh, Reginald ! I wish I were your brother instead of your sister, and then you would see what I should be."

Reginald shook his head with a slight

smile, and the subject dropped. He was extremely annoyed, but his mind was not a worrying mind: when a thing was to be, and he could not prevent it, he yielded to it and disturbed himself no more. Camilla, therefore, was left in peace, to the indulgence of her dreams and her will.

The day before her departure was Reginald's twenty-first birth-day, and the day was celebrated with especial signs of honour. Such signs were foreign to Lord Vere's character, but the birth of new feelings dictated them now.

Though not a hard landlord he was a morose one, and he and all his family were utter strangers to the peasantry thickly clustered around his abode. Ernest De Grey, on his first return, had seen with pain the banished and neglected state of those whom he in his childhood had known familiarly; and, in the hope of effecting a double good, had endeavoured to obtain Lady Vere's permission for Camilla to interest herself among the poor. A double good — for he felt that a knowledge of some of the realities of life

would be the best and most certain cure for the few faults of Camilla's character—faults to which even his admiring eyes could not be blind. But he was met by a resolute and animated refusal. It was one of the points on which Lady Vere had an opinion. Shortly after her arrival at Cranleigh the small-pox had been prevalent in the neighbourhood; and from that day poor people and diseases were inseparably bound up in her mind.

Baffled in his first attempt, Ernest next endeavoured to draw Reginald's attention to the subject, and with him he had been successful. Reginald had stood apart from no uncourteousness of mind—from no lack of charity. He never spoke to his inferiors, but his lightest actions always exhibited thoughtful consideration. The poor had felt this instinctively; and, while they stood in awe of Lord Vere, their feeling towards Reginald had been one of reverence as towards a superior being. A curious instance of this had been shown. Once on a breezy day, the shawl of a young girl whom he

passed, as he walked alone, was blown to a distance. He picked it up and restored it to her, without a smile, without a word, but gravely and courteously raising his hat as he gave it into her hand; and as if his touch had been like the touch of an old saint, the shawl was set apart by the parents of the girl from that day forward, as a thing too bright and good for daily use. This had been before Ernest's arrival; under his influence he had approached them more nearly; and while they revered him as much, they had learned to love him more. Familiar, Reginald could not be; but familiarity is not needful — none can give truly and from the heart except what they possess; and the *efforts* of condescension are alike displeasing to the rich and the poor. Many words and many smiles he could not give; but he gave, under Ernest's direction, that which was possible—thought and care. Having obtained his father's permission to interest himself in the concerns of his tenantry, he endeavoured to understand the circumstances of all classes; and

he endeavoured to show that he *was* so doing. He was understood; and the upward path of his life began to be followed by the eyes of the poor, and his way to be strewed and sanctified by their good wishes, their hopes, and their prayers.

Lord Vere saw,—and though he saw silently, saw with approval the awakening interest in his son. His own life, his own self, his own wrongs were beginning to pass from his mind, and his youth in a better and purer form to live again in his son. It was partly to strengthen this interest, partly to gratify Reginald himself, and partly to satisfy, by a public expression, the feelings of his own heart, that Lord Vere deviated from his usual conduct and decided on the celebration of his son's majority.

The arrangement of the festivities was intrusted to Ernest's care, and was singularly well conducted, all classes and all ages coming in for their proper share of enjoyment. He had an art for such things; for intense as was his own thirst for

happiness, so great, and even more intense, was his desire to see the happiness of others.

Late in the day a dinner was given to sixty or seventy yeomen of the better class of tenantry ; and at this dinner, at Ernest's special request, Lord Vere, accompanied by all his family, consented to appear.

It was a lovely evening in June ; the soft and serene close to a day of sunny beauty. The table had been spread on a plot of green lawn, immediately within the park, and overlooking the village ; where large oak trees bending around formed a kind of amphitheatre. The spot was beautifully situated ; the whole scene picturesque and interesting.

Dinner was nearly over when Lord Vere appeared. He paused at a distance from the table ; his coming had been an effort ; a nearer and more familiar approach would have been impossible. His presence, however, was an unexpected condescension, and as all rose from their seats it was acknowledged by a grateful though not enthusiastic cheer. Lord Vere bowed stiffly



and coldly as was his wont, and a silence followed. It was broken by the pronouncing of Reginald's name—and that name was hailed with such a shout as is seldom heard, except in Ireland. Reginald, disengaging himself from his mother (who, supported by the unusual excitement, had walked above half a mile without weariness), went forward to the head of the table, and taking off his hat, in a few simple words, gracefully and gratefully expressed his thanks. Again the shout arose, and while it was echoed from far and near, and echoed more loudly in Lord Vere's heart, he suddenly left his place—laid his hand on his son's shoulder, and in a voice heard amidst the din, for it was the voice of authority, said, "Speak to them, Reginald!"

There was a dead silence at once. Reginald glanced around him—fixed his eyes on his father, bent them for a moment to the ground: then as if a sudden inspiration mastered him, with a glowing cheek and kindling eyes, he turned to the expectant hearers and began.

It was as the pouring forth of his whole



nature ; in his advice, in his exhortations, he pourtrayed only himself. Loyalty the most chivalrous and devoted — the purest patriotism—a full and firm, though not perhaps a perfect, faith. The lofty aspirations, the keen and ardent thirst for reformation, and improvement, and progress, which was the natural tendency of his mind—blended with the sound and practical wisdom, and the more dutiful and reverential spirit which he had lately caught.

It is possible, nay probable, that his words and even sometimes his thoughts, were above the comprehension of the honest, but dull and ignorant men whom he addressed ; but as the sound of sweet and solemn music stirs the hearts of even the uneducated and unthinking, so fell upon these hearts the music of his voice, the music of his thoughts, the music of his words ; stirring, exalting, purifying them, lifting them for that moment of time from the low desires and earthborn cares which were the common element in which they dwelt. The effect of his words might be read in the light of the counte-

nances that gazed on him, and heard in the sound, not of the cheer, but of the hush which followed them. That instant's silence might have furnished a speaking picture for the pencil of a Wilkie. The long line of honest faces, with wide opened eyes, all resting on one youthful form—Reginald, his hat in his hand, his countenance flushed with feeling and excitement, the soft evening breeze lifting the curls from his pure and lofty brow—a few yards behind him his stern and careworn father with crossed arms, and downcast eyes—his mother with a look of startled intellect on her beautiful but inanimate face—and on the other hand, two who stood side by side with eager looks and lips apart; their eyes trembling and tearful with the excess of love and admiration that he excited in their hearts.

Reginald had paused for an instant, then in a few touching words, alluding to his past and present position among them, and expressing his own deep acknowledgments to his teaching, he gave the health of Ernest de Grey.

Shout rose upon shout, and both names—for both were loved—were blended together in the voices, and, as it seemed, in the hearts of the people. In the midst of the cheer Reginald returned to his mother, and observing that Ernest was unable to do more than simply and gratefully, by action rather than by words, to express his thanks, he gave her his arm, and, obeying his father's silent signal, drew her away.

Ernest and Camilla stood for a moment longer, then slowly followed them.

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Moments of strong excitement are dangerous moments: they disturb, they agitate; and under the influence of their agitation, reason, judgment, even principle itself, is often shaken on its throne. That the excitement proceeds from good feeling in no way detracts from—rather, perhaps, as being more delusive, adds to the dangers of the hour.

This day,—this celebration of Reginald's birth-day,—had been in many ways calculated to excite Ernest's mind, and arouse

his feelings, ever too quick to arise. Dreams of a long-past, of a once-pictured future, were thronging upon his fancy ; and envy—no base ungenerous feeling, but still an unspeakable, agitating envy—was stirring the very depths of his heart. And this excitement came upon a spirit in other ways strongly agitated.

During the flowing months of the past half-year, Ernest's feelings for Camilla had been lulled into quietness and repose. He saw her continually, but rarely saw her alone ; again, in Reginald's ever recurring returns, he was the companion of their rides and their rambles ; but it was the frank and fearless intercourse of their early acquaintance, not the dangerous intimacy of those few winter months. Happy in their presence, happy in the present hour, he yielded himself to its influence, and suffered no forward fears of fancy to obscure its brightness. The gladness of his heart shone on all around him ; Reginald's interest in his duties ennobled them in his eyes ; he performed them with a more steadfast and

willing heart: he thought he had left warfare and reluctance behind;—he was, in short, happy, and so much of the sunshine of youth was still about him, that he *could* live in the passing hour,—*could* “feed on pleasant thoughts, spite of conviction.” The announcement of Camilla’s departure had been the knell to these hours of inconsiderate enjoyment. Once again struggle and warfare came,—once again passion stirred in his heart,—once again the clouds of fear gathered about the future, and reluctance and distaste over his life. It was not because during one fortnight his eyes would wander in search of her in vain. Ernest was as much in love as man can be, but he was a man even in love, too much a man to indulge in idle sentiment: it was not her departure that agitated him,—it was the thought of her return. Vague, dark presentiments flitted over his soul, and a voice was ever whispering in his ear, that *his* day of happiness was over. Could others’ eyes see her, and fail to worship?—could other hearts approach, and fail to be won?—must

not all feel as he did, that one smile of affection from her lips would make life Paradise? And then—was *he* anything to her?—was there one feeling towards him which would bring her back in freedom should such other love assail her? These were the racking fears and tossing doubts which, never ending, still beginning, once more shook the innermost recesses of his soul.

And now the last day was come, and the day was passed in excitement. Around and about him there were scenes and sights of happiness, — boyish amusements, boyish sports,—which made his old boyish nature bound within him. Then came the evening—the picturesque scene—the sight of Reginald — Reginald's stirring words—the touching mention of himself—the shout—the thrilling music of human voices—that shout for him—and then . . . .

The noise and the excitement were over, and in the still soft evening,—in the much-loved scenes of his youthful joys,—he wandered in silence and alone by Camilla's side.



It was a dangerous moment—a moment of temptation,—and Ernest, agitated with conflicting feelings,—thoughts that stirred him and drew him up to Reginald's height, and thoughts that weighed him down and laid him at Camilla's feet, was scarcely himself to bear it.

They walked for a time slowly and in silence,—for Camilla also was in deep thought; and further and further Ernest's higher thoughts vanished, as every feeling began to gather around her, as every faculty of his intellect appeared to be centred on the question, "What feeling bowed her head and slackened her footsteps?"

The question was answered at length.

"Oh, Mr. De Grey!" she exclaimed, raising her lovely face, tearful still, and full of unwonted emotion, to his; "What does Reginald make you feel? Don't you wish with all your heart that you were like him?"

"I do," he replied; and all his heart was in the reply.

"No, I did not mean to say that to *you*," she said, with a manner that asked his for-



giveness. "I only meant to say that I wished it myself. You *are* like Reginald—you are good, like him. I ought not to have said that to you."

"No more like your brother," he replied, passionately, his voice and words alike betraying the excitement of his mind, "than a glorious angel is like a poor creeping worm."

"Oh, Mr. De Grey, you should not say that, for it is not true; but still I think you are so far right; there *is* something in Reginald unlike common human beings—something that makes one feel—at least, that makes me feel, sad, and ashamed, and longing to be, I hardly know what, but very different to what I am; not so low, so poor, so selfish . . . ." She paused, and sighed.

Ernest made no remark: he *could* not speak calmly; and they walked on in silence.

"I wish I was not going away to-morrow," she began again, after a pause, in a kind of musing tone. "I did wish so much to go, I could not give it up, not even for Reginald; but now I am sorry, very

sorry . . . .” She paused again, perhaps in hopes of consolation from those ever-sympathizing lips, but it came not. “One feels so differently,” she went on, “at different times. It did not seem wrong to wish for amusement, or to see beautiful sights, and other places besides this ; but now . . . .” Again she paused, and still no comment or consolation came.

“Why don’t you speak, Mr. De Grey?” she exclaimed at last, a little impatiently, and impatience banishing her sadder mood. “If you think me very wrong to go, I would much rather you told me so.”

“Wrong!” he cried, startled. “Oh no ; I had no such thought.”

“What, then!—what makes you so silent and so thoughtful?”

“I was thinking of myself—of what your going is to me.” He spoke calmly ; but self-control was giving way—he was entering into temptation.

“To you?” and she looked up with a smile? “Why, I think you will be able to bear it; I am to be back again in a fortnight.”

“But *how?*” He still spoke calmly; but irrepressible agitation was beating beneath.

“*How?*” she said, smiling still. “What do you mean? Do you think a fortnight can make any very wonderful change?”

If there had been one tone of feeling in her voice, he would have been still; but to let her go forth thus—thus careless, thus indifferent, thus unconscious of the love he bore her—he could not do it.

The inward struggle was prolonged upon his lips; he hesitated. Once and again his mouth was opened and closed again; but he spoke at length.

“Do you indeed ask me what I mean? And if I were to dare to tell, would you hear me speak?”

As if in calmness there were strength and resistance, he still spoke calmly, and his calmness failed to enlighten Camilla. Something—some expression of regret—something which might have been called a pretty speech she did expect, but no more.

She blushed deeply, and turned away her head; but there was nothing forbidding in

the movement. He might have been pardoned if it was misunderstood. Ernest paused no longer : he had led himself to the brink of temptation, and now, dizzy with excitement, he plunged in.

As he began to speak, scales fell from Camilla's eyes, and she attempted faintly to stop him ; but passionately saying, "No, it is done, and you must hear me now," he poured forth his love, and—for it was nothing less—idolatry.

Shrinking into herself, terrified and affrighted, Camilla heard him. Not one thought of what he felt towards her—not one idea of what it was to be loved as he loved her, had ever entered into her imagination to conceive. A mere child in mind, Miss Vincent had filled her fancy with tales of sentiment ; and, without a dream of accompanying feeling, she had fancied it a toy to play with, amusing herself with the thought of Ernest's love as with one of the idle tales she read.

There came a pause—hopeless, and yet his heart beating with hope—fearful, and

yet his heart agitated with the joy of having "told his love," Ernest hung upon her lips. And how was he awakened from his bewildering trance of feeling? Too much terrified to be penitent or to feel, too shy and shrinking to enter on the question of his love or her indifference, it was the petulant voice of a child that answered him.

"Don't, Mr. De Grey,—pray, don't say such things. I don't like them."

"You don't like them," he repeated, as if the words conveyed nor sound nor sense to his ears.

"I don't, I don't indeed," she said, shrinking from him. "I hope you never will say them again."

"Forgive me," after a long pause, murmured a voice beside her,—a voice changed and altered, of unutterable sadness,—“forgive my madness, and forget my—despair. It is all over now, for ever!”

He seemed hardly conscious that still he walked beside her: he was bowed alike with shame and misery—his broken vows—his shattered dream.

Camilla's heart swelled. His voice, his words had touched a place hitherto sealed and hidden within her. Childhood was passing away; she was beginning to think and to feel; the past was assuming its true colours, her own thoughtless conduct to awaken her to pity and remorse. She would have spoken if she could,—she would have unsaid her petulant words,—she would have asked him to pardon her, but she dared not.

A few moments brought them to the enclosed lawn and the broad gravel walk, and then Ernest came to himself. The others had far outstripped them, and had already entered the house. He stopped, and held out his hand in silence.

Touched and subdued, Camilla forced herself to speak.

“Won't you come in, Mr. De Grey?” she said softly, even tenderly. “Reginald expects you, and I am sure he will wish it.”

“No,” he replied, mournfully; “none can wish for the sight of one like me.” He paused, as if to gain the strength to speak calmly; then, holding the hand she had given



him, continued, " You must forgive me if you can,—you must forget, if you can, that I have spoken words which duty, truth, and honour forbade me to speak. I have grieved and pained you, whom I would die to save from one hour's uneasiness. I do not deserve your pity, but you may pity me; for I am lost for ever in your and my own esteem. And now, God bless you!"

He wrung her hand; and, without waiting for word or answer, disappeared.

With an aching heart, with tearful eyes, with a deep-drawn sigh, Camilla looked after him; but these signs of regret and repentance were unseen and unknown by him. He hurried on in bitterness of spirit through the tranquil wood, through the scenes of festivity, the sounds of mirth and gaiety falling maddening upon his ear, till he reached his lonely home. There, burying his head in his arms, he gave himself up to despair;—despair, because the stings of conscience wounded more sharply and bitterly than the pangs of despised love. How had he fallen! Where were his solemn vows?



—where was his truth, his duty?—where was a ray of trust in himself, or confidence for the future. Despair; because even then, when humbled in the dust, no vows of amendment, no prayers for strength were in his heart or on his lips! It was the old tempting, repining voice, that was murmuring, “Why was he singled out for disappointment?—why was every cherished hope of his heart to be doomed to destruction?—was it to be ever thus—ever and ever must he love in vain?”

## CHAPTER III.

The sea, the sea, the open sea.

SONG.

So begegnet Man sich immer wieder in der Welt.

"I AM afraid Miss St. Maur is tired," remarked Mr. Vincent, on the second evening of their arrival at —, speaking in his usual slow oracular manner.

Camilla was leaning back in her chair, silent, idle, and unoccupied.

Day-dreams are often doomed to disappointment, especially the day-dreams of those who, gifted with an ardent and vivid imagination, endow a *distant* scene with such virtues and properties as no *present* scene ever possessed. What Camilla had expected it would be hard to say; but had her picture been far less glowing than it really was, the private life of the Vincents

would have furnished few colours of enchantment to realize it. Mr. Vincent was kind, dull, and heavy—amusing for a time by his peculiar habit, but annoying afterwards. Mrs. Vincent, kind, but fussy—fussing about household concerns, which to Camilla, being entirely new, was enough of itself to destroy the romance of life. To those who are unaccustomed to the necessity for such cares, the details of life, the misdemeanours of servants, the extortions of butcher and baker, are very low, mean, and grovelling things. Miss Vincent, too, in her own family, was inclined to give herself airs—and altogether Camilla found that however pleasing novelty may be, it must depend on circumstances. This reflection was not a very new one, but it was new to Camilla, and she was pondering upon it.

“Oh no! I am not tired,” she said, rousing herself at Mr. Vincent’s voice, and sitting upright in her chair; “I was only thinking.”

“Miss St. Maur is kind enough to say she

is not tired," he pronounced; "but if I might presume to contradict her, I should say that there were some appearances of fatigue. How does it strike you, my dear?" addressing his wife; "I should say that Miss St. Maur looks a little pale."

"You do look pale, my dear Miss St. Maur. No!" as Camilla laughed and shook her head; "well, I dare say it is our fancy; you know we must be anxious about you. After all, however, it is only natural you should be tired. Sophia is tired too."

"We have had a very tiring day, in my opinion," Miss Vincent said, laughing; "a great deal of exercise, and no amusement or excitement. I am always tired when I am not excited."

"I hope Miss St. Maur does not find it dull?" Mr. Vincent asked, anxiously.

"Oh no, indeed!" Camilla said, with much earnestness, all her natural courteousness aroused; "my feet are a little tired with the shingles, but nothing else. I don't know what Miss Vincent means: I have enjoyed the day very much. If it were only to

stand and look at the rocks and the sea, I don't think I should ever wish for anything else. How very, very beautiful the sea is," she continued, drawing her chair a little nearer to Mr. Vincent, and endeavouring to make herself agreeable.

"Sophia admires the scenery as much as you do, Miss St. Maur," observed Mrs. Vincent, "but she thinks that scenery, like most other things, requires to be enlivened by living creatures, to make it perfectly agreeable."

"And Miss St. Maur feels the same, if she would own it," Miss Vincent said, looking up for a moment from a drawing on which she was engaged.

"Well, my dear Miss St. Maur, I am sure I hope you will have a little better amusement another day."—Mrs. Vincent spoke so fast that Camilla could not interrupt her. "It is not the season here, but there are a few people we know, and we shall see them to-morrow, I dare say. We have been rather unlucky in timing our visit, for all the world—all the world this place can boast of

— are gone to some races. I know young people like society, and I assure you we should not have asked you to come here only to our dull selves.”

“But, Mrs. Vincent, I don’t want society,” Camilla at last succeeded in saying. “I don’t the least agree with Miss Vincent. I should like to sit on the beach by myself all day. Pray don’t think I am tired,” and she left her seat and wandered to the open window to prove the truth of her words. On her return she stopped to look at Miss Vincent’s drawing. “Oh, Miss Vincent!” she exclaimed, “how very pretty! Is that the sketch you took to-day? I can’t think how you, who have so much to amuse you, can care about society. If I could draw, I am sure I should never be dull or lonely.”

“You are always moralizing for other people, Miss St. Maur, never for yourself,” Miss Vincent replied. “Perhaps I could answer you that if I were queen of Clare Abbey—with such a brother as Mr. St. Maur, and such a . . .” she paused and looked with a smile at Camilla; “. . . as Mr.

De Grey, *I* should never be dull or lonely,—*you* envy me — *I* envy you.” Camilla blushed and looked grave; the mention of Ernest made her feel ashamed and sorry;—the blushes were usual, the gravity not so usual, and perceiving that Camilla had no wish to pursue the subject, Miss Vincent continued, “But if you have a mind to draw, why don’t you draw?”

“Because I can’t — I never learnt. Reginald does not draw, and so I never wished to draw in former times.”

“Should you like it now? I shall be very happy to teach you, if you would.”

“I should like it better than anything in the world,” she exclaimed warmly.

“Then take a bit of paper and copy this sketch; I am sure you will be able to do it. Only determine you will. There are some pencils.”

Very eagerly Camilla sat down to her task, but protesting all the while that it was impossible. And extremely surprised she was and gratified when a very tolerable copy of a pencil sketch came forth from her hands.



“There, Miss Vincent,” she said, handing it to her, “what do you think of it? I hope you won’t say it is hopelessly bad.”

“Hopelessly bad, my dear Miss St. Maur? no, indeed, I shall say no such thing. I call it a work of genius—you know I always tell you, you are a genius if you would allow your genius to appear, and this proves it. I assure you it is extremely well done, wonderfully well done.”

“No, no, that is flattery,” Camilla said, “but if you don’t think it very bad, that is enough; you must teach me again to-morrow. It is not half so difficult as I thought. Do you think I could draw that fine pointed rock we saw to-day?”

“Of course you could; you have only to copy nature instead of my drawing. We will go to-morrow morning and try.”

Very early after breakfast, the following morning, Camilla reminded Miss Vincent of her promise, and they set off together to a spot on the beach, about half a mile from the hotel.

“How eager you are, Miss St. Maur,”

her companion remarked, as they walked along; "you take to everything so violently. What a treasure you must have been as a pupil!"

"Oh! dear no," Camilla said, "my governesses would have told you quite a different story. If I like a thing I take to it, but I never can do anything I dislike. I was a good child with my music and history, because I like these things—but I never could do sums or grammar, or anything difficult."

"I am very fond of languages. Do you like that kind of study?"

"No, not at all—I know French, of course, but I don't like it, and I know a little Italian—but I don't care about it—and as to German, I tried it once—or rather it was tried on me, for I hated it from the first moment—but quite in vain. I never could learn German."

"I think you have a great loss then—I am particularly fond of German literature. There is more feeling I think in the German

writers, than in all the authors of other countries put together."

"You always talk and think about feeling, Miss Vincent," Camilla said musingly.

"Do you object to it?" asked her companion.

"No, I don't know that I object—at least, I don't *now*. I did at first, for it made me feel melancholy—but now I don't so much mind feeling melancholy. I don't quite feel as I used to feel. I feel very odd sometimes."

Miss Vincent looked at her with a smile, and with some amusement. "And what has made a change?" she inquired.

"Oh! I don't know — I suppose you have."

"Me! impossible. *I* should not have been likely to make you *feel*. Do you know, I begin to hope that poor Mr. De Grey has at last made some slight impression on your stony heart. Now confess it."

"No, indeed, Miss Vincent," she said gravely; "and I wish you would not talk any more about Mr. De Grey—I don't like

it—and besides, he is a clergyman ; and that makes him quite different to other people. You should not talk about clergymen in that way.”

“ I don’t see that. Clergymen feel like other people, as you know very well. Now, Miss St. Maur, it is no use attempting to deceive me ; I see very plainly what has happened, and I should only be punishing you properly for your reserve with me, if I were to teaze you about it. But I will be generous. Now, here we are. Do you think your rock will do from this spot ?—or do you like to go higher ? ”

“ I think it looks very pretty from here.”

“ Well, then, you can sit on this stone, and I will lend you my block : it will be easier for you to hold than a bit of paper.”

“ What shall I do ? ” Camilla asked, looking despairingly at the number of objects before her and about her. “ You must tell me exactly. I am very sorry to give you so much trouble.”

“ It is no trouble : I am particularly fond of teaching. Look now : I would make that

rock the object of your drawing. I would take in those prettily-shaped distant ones in the background, and the rest should be water. Then, just in front, you might introduce those two boats. It will be a very pretty sketch ; and I shall do it myself."

Camilla sat down to her drawing, and Miss Vincent moved to a distance of five or six yards, to take the sketch in a slightly different point of view.

She talked as she sketched, lightly and easily ; but Camilla remained entirely engrossed with her drawing for upwards of a quarter of an hour. She then called to her companion.

"I wish you would come here, Miss Vincent. It don't look the least as I wish it to look. I wonder what you will think of it."

It was another voice, coming from immediately behind, that answered her. "Much genius," the voice said, "but little art."

Camilla started, looked up, and blushed deeply. It was Frank Hargrave who stood behind her,

He held out his hand without speaking, and then left her to meet Miss Vincent, who had been slowly moving towards Camilla, but now paused. To Camilla's surprise, she shook hands with him also ; and, though she asked him how long he had been at —, she evinced no extraordinary degree of astonishment at the sight of him.

They stood conversing for a few minutes ; then, while Miss Vincent was gathering her things together, he returned to Camilla, and his first words were as if they had parted but an hour before.

Waving his hand over the wide-spreading ocean before them, he said, "Is that the great world we spoke of?" and, while he spoke, he looked at her with that same smile and that same piercing gaze, which had before affected her so strangely.

She blushed, and forgot to answer him ; then, remembering she had forgotten, blushed more deeply.

A rather awkward silence followed ; then, with a kind of impatience against herself, Camilla took her book in her hand, and

went towards Miss Vincent, who was still arranging her pencils.

"Do look at my drawing, Miss Vincent," she exclaimed; "it is all wrong, I know; but I don't know *what* is wrong."

"I don't think it is at all, all wrong, my dear Miss St. Maur. It shows, I think, extraordinary talent; and if you take a little pains, I am sure you will be a great artist. Now, Mr. Hargrave, look at Miss St. Maur's first sketch. Don't you think it is wonderfully well done?"

"May I say what I really think, and without offence?" he said, with a smile, to Camilla.

"Oh, certainly," she replied. "I like the truth a thousand times better than flattery."

"I thought so. Then I may say that you and Miss Vincent are both right: as *she* says, it is very well done for a first attempt; and as *you* say, it certainly is all wrong."

"I see it is; but I can't see where. Can you show me?"

"I certainly can, if I may. Do you see your rock?" taking the drawing, and point-



ing upon it; "it is well done, very well done. I think your pencil touches are very promising; but how strangely you have placed it—how out of proportion, I mean, to all the other parts of your drawing. 'These boats, which are close to you, look like nutshells; and those fine distant rocks are more like hills of sand than bold rocks. I am sure you have genius, but you want a little art.'"

"I see now," Camilla said, laughing; "and I am very much obliged to you for your criticism."

"I must make again, Miss St. Maur," Miss Vincent exclaimed, "a remark I made just now: what a good pupil you make. I could never have stood, as you have done, to have my performance laughed at."

"Miss St. Maur is perfectly aware," Mr. Hargrave said, with a look of annoyance, "that laughing at her drawing was far from my mind."

"If you did laugh, it is only what everybody must do; and, besides, as I really wish to learn to draw, I am very glad to have the faults pointed out so as I can understand

them. Can you draw as well as criticise?" she asked, after a moment.

"Yes," he replied.

"How extremely honest you are, Mr. Hargrave," Miss Vincent said, laughingly. "You ought to have said 'a little,' as most people would have done, and then that would have left me the satisfaction of contradicting you, and perhaps paying you a compliment."

"I know I draw pretty well," he said, carelessly, and in a tone different to that in which he addressed Camilla; "it would have been affectation, therefore, to call it only a little."

"You are right. Mr. Hargrave draws very well," said Miss Vincent, turning to Camilla; "indeed, beyond praise; and if you wish to have a pretty drawing of your favourite rock, I advise you to ask him to sketch it for you."

Camilla was silent, and seemed unwilling to make the request.

"Should you really like it?" he asked, eagerly. "It would give me the greatest pleasure to do it."

"I should like it, certainly," she replied,

shyly; then with her fitful manner, which, like herself, was now a woman and now a child, continued animatedly, "I can't think what it reminds me of; but I think it must be the rock in 'Anne of Geierstein.' But I should be sorry to give you the trouble."

"It shall be done in a moment; and if you and Miss Vincent can wait a few minutes, I will return with it here."

Without waiting for an answer, he sprang on a piece of rock above them, and disappeared.

Camilla walked to a little distance, then sat down on a stone, and began to draw circles on the sand with her parasol. Miss Vincent put a few more touches to her drawing, then came and seated herself at her feet.

"You knew Mr. Hargrave before, I think?" she inquired.

"Yes, a very little. He came once to Clare Abbey—I forget exactly when, but it was some time last winter."

"*I* remember exactly when. He called at Carrington the day after he called on you."

"Did he?" she said, with some surprise, but said no more.

"Now, Miss St. Maur," Miss Vincent remarked, laughingly, "what do you want to ask me?"

"Nothing," Camilla said, decidedly.

"Oh, Miss St. Maur," shaking her head, "I don't believe you. But I shall punish you well: I shall not tell you one word of what Mr. Hargrave said about you."

"I don't want to know," she said, impatiently; "I would rather not hear. I wish you would believe me, Miss Vincent: I hate not to be believed."

"I am very sorry to say such an uncivil thing," she replied playfully; "but there are some things I really cannot believe. If anybody says a pretty thing about me, I like to hear it; and I cannot help thinking, that if all people were as honest as I am, all would own the same."

Camilla made no answer, but proceeded with innumerable circles on the sand. Before a fresh subject could be started, Mr.

Hargrave stood by Camilla's side, and placed the desired sketch in her hand.

She made an exclamation of pleasure and amazement. He had been absent barely a quarter of an hour; but the sketch was a prettily finished water-coloured drawing, in tints of blue and brown.

"Is it possible you have done this now?"

He smiled, and seemed gratified by her surprise; but he proceeded to explain it.

"The colours seem perhaps miraculous," he said; "but they would not, if you were accustomed to drawing. I am very fond of travelling, and very fond of sketching, when an object strikes me: I am obliged, therefore, to carry my materials with me. You shall see the whole apparatus."

He drew from his pocket a set of drawing and painting materials in miniature, and exhibited them to her pleased and wondering eyes.

"How very, very pleasant it must be to draw so well," she said, returning again to admire the pretty sketch. "It makes me more envious than I can say."

“You will soon draw well, if you wish it so much. Wish and fancy go a great way.” He paused a moment, and seemed to be considering, then continued: “Perhaps I am going to make a strange proposal—Miss Vincent must correct me if it is so; but if I could be of any use in teaching you the first elements of drawing, I shall be here for two or three days, and I can only say that it would give *me* the greatest pleasure to assist you.”

Camilla looked at Miss Vincent. She did know what she ought to say, was not sure what she wished to say.

“I advise you to profit by Mr. Hargrave’s proposal, Miss St. Maur. It is so good a one, that if I am allowed, I shall take advantage of it myself.”

Camilla still hesitated. “I should like it,” she said, “but do you think Mrs. Vincent will not object?”

“Mamma would not, I think, object to *anything* you proposed—I am sure she would not to this; you need not be afraid.”

“Then I should be very much obliged

to you ;” and she raised her eyes with a faint blush to Mr. Hargrave.

He looked as if he could scarcely restrain himself from saying something extremely pretty—but he did refrain, and only replied, that she need not be obliged, as it would make him very happy to assist her. Immediately afterwards remarking that he had an appointment with a friend, he bowed and left them—and Camilla and Miss Vincent returned homewards.



## CHAPTER IV.

She, full of inward questions, walks alone,  
To take her heart aside in secret shade;  
But knocking at her breast it seem'd, or gone,  
Or by confederacy useless made.

Or else some stranger did usurp its room,  
One so remote and new in every thought,  
As his behaviour shows him not at home,  
Nor the guide sober that him thither brought.

Yet with this foreign heart she does begin  
To treat of love, her most unstudied theme.

GONDIBERT.

CAMILLA'S sense of something uncongenial in the Vincents did not evaporate; on the contrary, when their number was increased by a few friends different in name, but the same in manner, the uncongeniality increased in a like degree.

On the third evening, the evening of the day of the meeting on the sea-shore, Mrs. Vincent managed to collect half a dozen

acquaintances at their hotel. There were two old gentlemen, and two young ones, and two ladies; all rather pleasing in appearance than otherwise, and yet Camilla sat apart, and felt as she had never felt before, isolated and desolate;—and what was still more unusual, unwilling to be noticed. There was nothing very remarkable in this, for manners are a greater bond of union than minds—at least, on a first acquaintance they are so—and the manners of the Vincents and their friends were not the manners to which Camilla was accustomed. The atmosphere around Clare Abbey was one of extreme and even fastidious refinement. Nothing like noise or bustle was ever heard. The children, as children, had been taught to pitch their voices in a certain key—the very servants spoke and moved noiselessly. Something of the same characteristic distinguished Camilla's few acquaintances—even Mr. and Mrs. Hervey being quietly common-place, or quietly prolix. The very fact, therefore, that the voices of these new acquaintances

were pitched in a louder key than the one to which she was accustomed, and that their laugh was more frequent and more ringing, was in itself sufficient to make her feel in a new element; but in addition to this, the conversation displeased her; it might be more in the manner than in the words—but certainly the freedom with which Miss Vincent allowed herself to be addressed by the young men, and rallied about her “conquests,” was new to her. She felt she did not like it, and retiring to a sofa, at a distance from all but Mr. Vincent, who was dozing, she sat apart, amusing herself by observation.

“My dear Miss St. Maur,” Mrs. Vincent exclaimed, when she observed her position, approaching her with an apology upon her lips and in her manner; “why do you hide yourself in this way? I hope Sophia has not forgotten to introduce you to our friends?”

“Oh! no, indeed, she did everything right; but you know I know nobody, and I had rather sit here if you don’t mind.”

“Of course, my dear, I like best whatever

you like best, but I am sorry to see you so dull. What shall we do to amuse you? We will have a round game by and by, if you like. Do you like cards?"

"I like to listen better than anything, if I have something to do with my fingers. Would it be wrong to work? I did not feel sure whether you would like it."

"Wrong to work!" exclaimed Miss Vincent, laughing. "No, my dear Miss St. Maur; pray do whatever you like best while you are with us. Mr. Langley, be so good as to bring Miss St. Maur her work-basket from the piano-forte. Now, pray sit still, my dear; what are men made for but to be employed? Well, if you like to sit here, like a little hermit, you shall, for a time; but we will have a round game by-and-by;" and leaving Camilla, she returned to her guests.

Camilla worked and listened, and was amused; but her listening did not increase her desire for further acquaintance; and after a time she fell into a meditation on the disappointments of novelty again, and

thought, with much tenderness and longing, of Reginald and her home. She was roused by a movement in the room,—Mrs. Vincent going across to speak to her daughter. As she raised her eyes she met the eyes of Mr. Hargrave, who stood in the doorway, and was looking at her fixedly. She blushed, and proceeded with her work; and he withdrew his gaze; but it was strange how, in a moment, the face of things was changed: the Vincents became less vulgar, the strangers less strange, her home and Reginald disappeared, or melted into the distance.

Mrs. Vincent, after speaking to her daughter for a few moments, passed on, and approached Mr. Hargrave.

“You are very late,” she said, “I was afraid you were going to disappoint us.”

“I was detained,” was all he said.

“Now that you are come, I hope you will take charge of Miss St. Maur’s amusement. Poor little thing! either she is shy, or else our friends do not suit her; or else she is not suited to them; but there she has been

sitting alone, till I felt quite ashamed of ourselves. I promised her a round game, and was just speaking to Sophia about it, but she is going to sing with Mr. Langley, and does not fancy giving it up. If *you* will undertake her, she will be well amused, which is no compliment I assure you, and I and Mr. Vincent may go comfortably to our whist."

Frank Hargrave bowed in answer to Mrs. Vincent's arrangements, but stood still till they had been carried into effect. He then joined Miss Vincent at the piano-forte, looked over her music, and asked for two or three particular songs; finally, slowly and thoughtfully he approached Camilla.

He took a chair, and placed it nearly opposite to her; a long narrow-shaped table between them.

"Did you see Mrs. Vincent speak to me?" he inquired, as he sat down.

"Yes!" she said, a little surprised and curious.

"Do you know what she said?"

Camilla shook her head without looking up.

"She feared you might be dull, and desired me to undertake your amusement. Do you consent to my endeavouring at least to obey her wishes?" He leant his arm upon the table, and looked at her.

She smiled, but blushed more deeply. The same uneasy feeling was stealing over her.

But if he had power to make her uneasy, he had power also to dispel her uneasiness. Looking carelessly round the room, he asked her quietly if she had made the acquaintance of all who were present.

"I have been introduced to them," she said, recovering herself; "but I don't know them, do you?"

"I know them all but one. The lady in the garland is a total stranger to me, and I should be sacrificing truth to politeness if I did not add, that I hope she will remain so."

"I should think so," Camilla said, laughing; "I really think people who dress in such a way ought to be banished from society."



“Dressing well is a great art, very few understand it. Most people suppose that to dress means to over-dress. The lady with the garland, for instance, supposes that she is equipped most becomingly, and if those sun-flowers or star-fishes—for really I can’t distinguish their exact features—were removed, she would hide her diminished head with shame and confusion.”

“Miss Vincent dresses well; don’t you think so?”

“Yes, certainly well. Her plain silk gown is, as the old saying says, ‘Neat, but not gaudy.’ Yesterday I should have admired Miss Vincent’s dress very much—to day, if I cannot do so, *you* must forgive me.” And he turned upon Camilla again one of those earnest admiring gazes beneath which her whole being seemed to tremble.

His admiration might at the moment have been forgiven, for she looked surpassingly lovely. Her dress was simplicity itself, but its simplicity served but to heighten the contrast of her high-born air with her handsome but differently-moulded companions. Her curls,

disordered by the sea breezes, were gathered up behind ; her beautiful profile was more distinctly visible, and as her head slightly bent forward, her colour rising and fading, and her long lashes resting shyly and tremblingly on her cheek — a more graceful or interesting object could scarcely have been conceived.

A silence followed, and this time it was Camilla, impatient and angry with herself, who broke it.

“Do you know Reginald well, Mr. Hargrave ? ”

“What does your brother say ? ” he inquired, in answer. “I must not claim more acquaintance than he chooses to allow.”

“I don’t know. He did not tell me.”

“No,” he replied, after a little thought ; “I don’t know your brother well. We move in different spheres — we have different pursuits, different friends, and different objects in life.”

“But then, how do you know him at all ? and you seemed to know him pretty well too.”

“We have a mediator between us,” he

said, with a smile ; “ a link which joins us together. There is a person at Oxford whose character is yet undecided. There is no saying what he will be. He is not like your brother — very, very different ; but in him the organ of veneration is strong. He looks up to your brother — I might say he worships him ; and yet he condescends to notice so unworthy an individual as myself. At his rooms I and your brother often meet.”

“ And don’t *you* admire Reginald ? ” Camilla inquired eagerly, for she had fancied there was something of sarcasm in his tone.

“ Yes, I admire him — but I am not and never could be like him, and — if you will not be offended at my saying so — I do not wish it.”

“ I think all the world might well wish to be like Reginald,” she said with vehemence ; “ it would be a different world if it was so.”

“ It would,” he said, smiling, “ and perhaps not so pleasant a one.” He paused ; then, fixing his piercing eyes upon her, he continued : “ Would you, yourself, wish it to

be so? I may be asking too plain a question. But, if I may ask, can you truly and honestly say, that you would desire (not thinking of him with the feeling of a sister, but simply as an abstract person) that all the world should indeed be as much exalted above common feelings, common infirmities, common errors, as your brother is? For myself, I will confess at once that I should prefer some mixture of lower ingredients."

"I don't know what you mean by lower ingredients," Camilla said, thoroughly roused; "I know I am not very good myself, and there are some kinds of goodness which I don't like — I wish I did. But if you mean anything of badness and wickedness, I scorn and hate them."

He looked at her glowing colour and sparkling eyes with an admiration which was not unmingled with surprise; and after looking at her for a moment, he fell into meditation.

"You are right," he said at last, after a thoughtful silence, "and I only wish I might speak as you do."

“ And why may you not ? ”

“ Because I have no right.”

She blushed and trembled ; a strange fear crept over her. Was it possible that he was a bad man—such as she had sometimes read of ? Her countenance showed uneasiness and curiosity, but she asked no question.

“ You do not like hypocrisy, do you ? ” he inquired, reading every thought in her expressive countenance, as if it was a book before him.

“ No ; I hate it,” she said, vehemently.

“ So do I, and therefore I dare not speak as you do ; for by so doing I should either act the hypocrite, and seem to claim a character which I do not deserve — or else I should too vehemently condemn myself.”

She looked at him with the same curious, uneasy look, but was silent.

“ All men are not formed alike,” he continued ; “ some are weaker and more liable to temptation than others. Your brother is one in a thousand. He is, I truly believe, above temptation, for I have seen him tried.

But for myself, I must confess that no language comes more home to my lips and my feelings than the confession of our Church : ' I have done that which I ought not to do, and I have left undone that which I ought to have done, and there is no health in me.' "

He repeated the words slowly, reverently, and feelingly ; and Camilla's ideas began to change, but still she said nothing.

" And now you despise me ? " he asked, watching her countenance.

" No," she said, at first hesitatingly, then more earnestly ; " Oh, no. I don't mind faults—I never could. Some of the greatest men have had faults. But what I mind is a low, mean, dishonourable character."

" You are right," he repeated again. " Faults are but on the surface, and they pass away. The natures of some men are so formed as to be exposed to greater and stronger temptations than others ; and as I think we cannot but hope that the merciful Creator of man will judge such natures with compassion rather than severity, so, too, we should judge our fellow-creatures with a



merciful, and not a severe judgment. What were you going to say?" he inquired, after a moment, still watching, still reading her countenance.

"I only thought," she replied, hesitatingly, as if she was forced, however unwillingly, to answer his questions, and confess to him all that passed through her mind,—“I was surprised—I thought that you spoke like a clergyman.”

"I might do so," he replied, smiling, "for such was once my appointed and accepted destiny. My father, my mother, all my friends, in short, were anxious that a clergyman's life should be my choice. I felt no strong objection, and I consented."

"And now have you changed your mind?" Camilla asked, with interest.

"Yes, I have. My consent was lightly given, when I was young and thoughtless, and careless about the responsibility of such a life. Since I have begun to think, and to know myself better, I feel that it is too good a life for me. In some ways it is very suitable to my taste; at some periods I could



preach as zealously, if not as eloquently, as St. Paul ; but it would be by fits and starts, and when I was weary of it, I fear . . . No, it would not do. I told my mother that my conscience would not permit my gratifying her wishes, and she has not pressed me."

"Then what are you, or what do you mean to be?"

"I am nothing ; and what I mean to be is a question which I ask myself every night and every morning, and still it remains unanswered. Will *you* advise me?"

"I cannot conceive a doubt," Camilla said, smiling. "A soldier, or a sailor—I could be nothing else."

Frank Hargrave shook his head.

"I wish I could say that such would be the life I should choose ; but it would be false, and I must confess my insignificance, even at the risk . . . ." He stopped. "No, I could not be a soldier. It is not, I hope, from any want of valour—I have never yet known the sensation of fear ; but I am wilful and changeable—what some call *inconsis-*

*tent.*” And he smiled. “I could not live in obedience and dependence ; I could not be at the command of another ; I could not even breathe freely the air of heaven, if I breathed it in a spot to which the will of others condemned me. And now,” he said, looking at her, “again you despise me.”

“No, I don’t indeed. I like to think of a brave soldier ; but I know nothing of a soldier’s life. I might dislike it too, if it *could* happen that I was tried ; and, at any rate, there are other ways of being great.”

“But not for me. I have never thought or dreamed of greatness : the same independence which makes me shrink from subjection to authority, would make me shrink from greatness too. I like quiet and peaceful ways, and I fear I like my own will. Greatness is subject to rules, because its nature is to live in the sight of man. It is bound with an iron yoke ; for it would scarcely dare to descend and breathe freely, lest it should be called inconsistent.”

“I dare say,” Camilla said, thoughtfully. “Yes, of course, a great man is watched ;

but still, to be great, one might bear a little restraint; it would be worth it."

"How much you think of greatness!" he said, looking earnestly at her.

"Do I?—yes, I think I do. I like very fine characters. Don't you care about it in the least?"

"I don't say that. I only say that, for myself, I have never dreamed of greatness. I have always looked on the atmosphere of greatness as too cold and calculating for me." He paused, then taking up a book, and resting his eyes upon it while he spoke, he went on. "I say that I never have dreamed of greatness, but I mean that I have never done so *hitherto*. Hitherto, I have only thought of pleasing myself; and what I might be, if a better object was set before me, I do not know. I was a spoiled child, and perhaps I am so still; others have thought of me, but hitherto I have never thought of others. I can conceive a feeling which might change a nature even less likely to be changed than mine." And musingly, and in a low voice, and not, or barely, as if

they were addressed to Camilla, he repeated the following lines :—

“ Lovest thou greatness ?—I will love it too ;  
For thee, my life shall change its peaceful hue ;  
I'll climb, with eagle wings, the vaulted sky,  
And if for me capricious Fortune's star  
Shall dimly shine, or sternly frown afar,  
What matter ? in the glory of thine eye  
I'll read approval, and, contented, die.”

A silence followed. Camilla's head stooped lower over her work ; new and strange sensations were stealing over her, and, unable to interpret them, she longed only for solitude. She knew not what to say ; she dreaded lest he should speak again ; and, as a means of escape, she turned her head, and looked anxiously towards Miss Vincent and her companions.

“ Do you like music ? Shall we go to the piano-forte ? ” Frank Hargrave asked, in a manner so totally different, that even while it relieved it puzzled her.

She acquiesced willingly, and sat down in silence on the chair he placed for her by the side of the piano-forte.

A good deal of lively conversation fol-

lowed ; but in it Frank Hargrave bore but little, and Camilla no share. She was deep in thought, and deep in thought she remained when the party broke up.

Miss Vincent accompanied her to her room, to ring her bell, and light her candles, and see that all was comfortable ; for Camilla, she had soon perceived, was a child indeed in all the common occurrences of life.

Camilla sat down, and allowed her to place the candles and move the chairs at her pleasure.

“What sort of a person is Mr. Hargrave ?” she inquired at last. “Is he a good sort of person ?”

“A good sort of person !” Miss Vincent said, laughing. “I don’t know what to say, —my idea of a good sort of person is something so very sedate and hum-drum,—something so very different, in short, to Mr. Hargrave. But he *is* very good, I have no doubt. I never heard any harm of him, except that young ladies are rather too apt to fall in love with him ; and that, as his mother says, is their fault, not his.”

“Is he so very much inclined to fall in love?” Camilla asked, and asked uneasily.

“No, far from it. I did not say *he* was. *He* is very fastidious; and his mother says it would give her real pleasure to see him truly in love. I only said that young ladies were rather too apt to fall in love with him.” Unconsciously Camilla raised her head, with a flushed cheek and a proud glance. “You see,” Miss Vincent continued, playing with the extinguisher of her candlestick, “he is very agreeable, which is scarcely his fault, and very good-looking, which certainly is not his fault; and young ladies—*some* young ladies—are flattered by his notice; and the end is, they lose their hearts. But it is their fault, not his. I am sure—and I know him pretty well—that he never would give any one *real* cause to think he liked them,—was in love with them, I mean,—unless he was so. But good-night: it is late.” And as Camilla’s maid entered the room, she left it.

“How pale you look, ma’am! You must

be very tired," was the remark of her attendant.

"Yes, I am rather tired. Don't be long brushing my hair. I think the sea air tires me." And she sat again in profound abstraction.



## CHAPTER V.

. . . . He says he loves my daughter,  
I think so too; for never gazed the moon  
Upon the water, as he'll stand and read  
As 'twere my daughter's eyes.

## THE WINTER'S TALE.

THE drawing lessons began the next day, and as the master was extremely attentive, and the lessons were prolonged for three or four hours, it was natural that the pupils should make great progress. And they did so. Camilla had a good deal of genius; not for drawing in particular, but she had that turn of mind which seizes on ideas, and by quickness and originality of perception makes them its own. If she had hitherto profited but little in her studies, it was for want of patience and perseverance, not capacity; and perseverance was not wanting now. Miss Vincent drew tolerably well — she did most things well up to a

certain point—and she had sufficient taste to appreciate Frank Hargrave's superior talent, and to profit by it.

Few pupils have had so entertaining a teacher. At first he watched over them incessantly, but varied his instructions by a fund of conversation of the most interesting and amusing kind—then he read to them, at short intervals, little pieces of his own selection, well chosen and well read. On the morning of the fourth lesson, he said such constant watchfulness was no longer necessary, and placing before the two a rough bold sketch prepared for their special instruction, he sat down opposite to them, and commenced a reading of a more continuous kind.

For the morning's entertainment he had chosen Miss Baillie's beautiful play of Count Basil, and Camilla's most intimate acquaintance; the most watchful student of her character could not have chosen better, so far as her tastes were concerned. There is a chivalrous spirit in the play, in the Love, as well as in the Love of glory, which pecu-

liarly adapted it to the strongest features of her disposition; and if in former times the latter passion would have touched her most, a change was coming over her, which made the former no less interesting now.

Frank Hargrave read well, and more than well. It was scarcely reading; it was nearer acting; and as the play proceeded, and as raising his eyes again and again, he ever met Camilla's glance, now sparkling with excitement, now tearful with emotion, he gathered increase of power, increase of passion, till he and his hearers alike were carried away.

At the conclusion of the play, he sat for a few moments silent; then, closing the book, he said, "Such is the power of Love."

"And yet it is a power Miss St. Maur doubts," Miss Vincent said, laughing; "she has told me so again and again. It is possible her opinion may be changed, for I have certainly caught her weeping over these sorrows of love; but it is not very long ago since she doubted whether . . . . What have

you not said, Miss St. Maur? for I may mistake your opinions."

"Do you doubt the power of love?" Frank Hargrave inquired, fixing his eyes earnestly on Camilla as he spoke.

"I don't know," she replied, bending her head over her drawing. A moment afterwards, however, raising her eyes and speaking with some vehemence, she added, "Yes, I think I do doubt the existence of any power which could, in real life, make a brave man forget glory and duty, as Count Basil did."

"I was right you, see," Miss Vincent said, mockingly; "Miss St. Maur not only doubts, but actually does not understand what the power of love may be. I wish I could teach her better things—I confess I have tried, and in vain."

"You wrong her, I think," Frank Hargrave said, watching Camilla as he spoke; "Miss St. Maur may agree with the sentiment expressed in Landor's emphatic words '*Love is a secondary passion in those who love most; a primary in those who love least.*'"

*He who is inspired by it in a great degree, is inspired by honour in a greater.*’ That, I think, was all she meant to express. Have I explained your meaning truly?” he inquired, and he waited for an answer.

“Yes, very well, exactly;” she replied, hastily raising her eyes and looking down again.

“*I don’t understand your meaning,*” Miss Vincent said; “at least, if I do, I think I could disprove it by a thousand examples; witness the noble, chivalrous, ambitious Count Basil himself. But I won’t stay to argue with you, for I promised mamma to write to the housekeeper at Carrington, when I had done my drawing, and it is done;” and throwing it on the table, and without noticing Camilla’s look of uneasiness, she left the room.

That Frank Hargrave’s society was pleasant to her,—that his power over her was a strange one, none could doubt; but she never found herself alone with him without a feeling of uneasiness, which changed her into a different being. The feeling was on

this occasion increased by the remembrance of the subject under discussion.

But her uneasiness was needless, for observing her embarrassment, his only desire was to dispel it. Pushing the book from before him, and taking Miss Vincent's drawing in his hand, he began to comment upon it in playful and rather sarcastic terms.

"Don't you admire it?" Camilla asked, recovering herself, and looking up with surprise. "It seems to me so very pretty; I only wish I could ever hope to draw half as well."

"You already draw a thousand times better," he said quietly and sincerely, not complimentarily.

She laughed and shook her head.

"I mean what I say," he continued, and he came towards her to examine her drawing. "Miss Vincent puts on her colours smoothly, and gives a very finished look to her sketches; but there could not be a question that there is more genius in that one drawing of yours than in all Miss Vincent's put together."



"But what is the use of genius, then," Camilla said, laughing, "if it is only to make a mess and look very ugly? It would be better to be without it."

"Now do you see what I mean?" he cried, taking the two drawings, and placing them together at a distance; "do you understand what I mean by genius, now?"

Perhaps Camilla internally confessed that in the distance her rough bold colouring did put Miss Vincent's more minute workmanship to shame; for she said no more: but as she held out her hand for her drawing, inquired, "Don't you like Miss Vincent?"

"Why should you think I did not?" he said, looking at her smilingly.

"I don't exactly know; I thought you did till to-day, but I fancied just now that you did not like her."

"Do *you* like her?"

"Oh! yes, very much."

"But do you love her?"

"No," Camilla said hesitatingly, "I don't think I do."

"No more do I!" he continued laughingly,



“and never could nor can conceive any one’s loving her. She is handsome, I think, and agreeable in a certain way, and very kind and good-natured; but that is all. I may not do her justice; I don’t know her well enough to pretend that I fully understand her character, but she seems to me, judging from the surface, to be both frivolous and worldly, and I should fancy she might be a dangerous companion.”

“You speak exactly like Reginald,” Camilla said thoughtfully. She was thinking not of *him*, but of Miss Vincent and of Reginald’s strong prejudice against her; but to *him* her thoughts were drawn when she saw the flash of pleasure that lighted his eyes and flushed his cheek.

“Do you know,” he said, stooping down a little, “that you have paid me the highest compliment that I ever have received, or could wish to receive?”

She blushed, but attempted to laugh. “That was not your opinion a few days ago; you did not wish to be like Reginald then.”

He made no immediate answer, but placed himself behind her, and commented on her drawing before he said, in a lower voice, "I confess I have changed, in a degree. May I tell you why?"

"Oh, no!" she said hurriedly; "of course, people may change;" and she nervously dashed her brush into the glass of water (no longer harmless) that stood beside her, splashing it over her drawing in her tremor.

He quickly took the brush from her hand, and remedied the evil, and then calmly returned to his instructions, till Mrs. and Miss Vincent re-entered the room.

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Mrs. Vincent was called by all her acquaintance a kind motherly woman; and she was so, but a most injudicious one. Most mothers—even injudicious mothers—would have seen the danger of such an intercourse as that now established between Frank Hargrave and her daughter and Camilla, but Mrs. Vincent did not think of it. Governed in all such points by her

daughter, she had acquiesced at once when permission was asked for the proposed plan, and having acquiesced, allowed things to take their course. She was accustomed to singing lessons with her daughter; there was nothing very new therefore in the present arrangement. Mr. Vincent, more observant, made an effort at remonstrance.

“Miss St. Maur is very young, my dear, and she and Mr. Hargrave are a great deal together. I hope nothing will come of it that Lord and Lady Vere may disapprove.”

“What should come of it,” Mrs. Vincent replied, laughing, “but a little flirtation, at the very worst? you are so fond of interference for nothing. Do you remember how uneasy you were when Mr. Langley came to practise with Sophia last year? but what harm did it do? You confessed you were mistaken then.”

“I confessed I was mistaken then!” he repeated solemnly. “Nevertheless . . . .”

“Oh, pray don’t make a fuss about it! Consider what a dull life the poor little

thing leads at home. I am sure no word of mine shall spoil her pleasure here."

"She leads a dull life at home, and therefore the more . . . ." but a speech of considerable wisdom and observation from Mr. Vincent was lost to posterity from the indifference of his wife, who did not pause to hear its conclusion. She opened the door into the adjoining room, where a drawing lesson was taking place, and was immediately appealed to by her daughter for her decision, on a point which put her wisdom and judiciousness to the test.

Among Frank Hargrave's drawings some little crayon portraits, cleverly and prettily done, had been found by Miss Vincent. Extremely delighted with them, she had first called upon him to attempt her likeness; then, on second thoughts, had suggested that Camilla should sit to him. Frank Hargrave caught eagerly at the proposal, but on observing Camilla's very evident distaste, had refrained from pressing it. Miss Vincent, however, conscious of his wish, and supposing that Camilla's shyness

was only common shyness (perhaps a little put on, as she had sometimes observed among her acquaintance), held to her point, and with many arguments was endeavouring to overcome her reluctance. It was not overcome at the time of Mrs. Vincent's entrance, for shrinking and embarrassment might plainly be read on her countenance. But Mrs. Vincent could not resist her daughter's appeal; or, if she had resisted, being unable to conceive reluctance to have a portrait painted gratis (a point, rich as she was, far from indifferent to her), gave her decided opinion in favour of the proposal, and so it was settled. Wilful and wayward as Camilla was at home, her wilfulness was that of habit, not of nature. She was at the command of those who chose to command her, as her submission to Miss Vincent had from the first plainly proved; and now, like a puppet in their hands, she acquiesced in their will.

And so, the live-long day, she and Frank Hargarve were together. In the morning there were the drawing lessons; in the

afternoon the portrait painting; in the cool evening there were wanderings along the beautiful sea-shore, or excursions on the water, prolonged till the moon was high in the heavens; and (though seldom entirely alone,) Frank Hargrave was ever at her side;—so much uncertainty only in his attention as prevented comments he did not desire to excite; and as recalled now and then, when she had time for thought, the warning received (a warning not intended, yet accepted as such) from Miss Vincent's lips.

But there was truly little time for thought: the days passed as in a dream,—the excitement never died away, and so they came to the conclusion of the fortnight and to the last day but one of Camilla's stay.

On the afternoon of that day the portrait was to be concluded; the whole of the next was to be devoted to an excursion to some beautiful ruins, which Camilla had much wished to see.

The drawing had been attempted in a more ambitious style than was common to



him, and so had been prolonged from day to day; but Frank Hargrave was clever, and failure was a word scarcely allowed in his vocabulary. The sittings had passed pleasantly, for he had himself taken pains that nothing should occur to cause embarrassment to Camilla. Mrs. and Miss Vincent had remained in the room, and Miss Vincent had generally read aloud at his request, when the more minute parts of the picture occupied his own attention.

On this last day, however, Miss Vincent was out, and Mrs. Vincent was suddenly called by visitors into the adjoining room.

Frank Hargrave stopped her as she was hurrying away. "I know you have thought me whimsical and ridiculous, if not arrogant and presumptuous, for refusing to hear comments or criticisms upon my performance. But the fact is, that criticisms, to me at least, are utterly useless, till the idea is thoroughly worked out;—they only ruffle my temper, and make me appear like an arrogant bear. Now, however, the picture will be finished in half an hour, and I shall be most grateful



for any criticisms you can make, and the more the better."

Mrs. Vincent stood behind him, and was sincere as well as warm in her praise.

"I wish I could find a fault, Mr. Hargrave, for the sake of showing a little discernment, but I am sorry to say I cannot. You have made a pretty picture and a perfect likeness, and what can one say more? One thing more, however, I will say, not to you, but to Miss St. Maur," and she turned with a smile to Camilla; "Mr. Hargrave has made a very pretty picture, my dear Miss St. Maur; but notwithstanding, he has not flattered you," and nodding her head with kind admiration at Camilla, she left the room.

A silence followed the closing of the door. The close intercourse of the past days had not been without effect on Camilla's mind. They had deepened and strengthened the attraction with which Frank Hargrave had from the first attracted her—and in the same degree had dispelled the fear with which she had originally resisted the attraction. If

now she sat silent and uneasy—if she desired to break the silence, yet found in every subject a meaning which made it dangerous—it was simply from shyness, and proceeded rather from confidence than doubt.

While she sat thus timid and shrinking, wishing yet dreading her companion would speak, he continued his work, and as if to relieve her, without raising his eyes; at length he spoke.

“I have almost finished my work, and for the first time in my life, for I am not naturally persevering, I think of its conclusion only with regret.”

He gave a single glance, then withdrew it again.

If Camilla had once had a childish propensity to flirt, that time was past. It *must* be past when true feeling is excited; for what are flirtations and sentimental conversations but an acting of that on the surface, which, in its intensity, “has that within which passeth show?” Far, therefore, from desiring to enter on such a conversation now, her only thought was to escape from it;

yet she paused ; fearful even in escaping to understand too much.

"I should like to take likenesses," she said at last, not answering his speech, yet not entirely changing the subject ; "it must be very interesting, but I suppose *very* difficult."

"Not very difficult, I think," he replied ; "it is of course more or less difficult to do anything *well* ; but the mere act of taking a likeness is not difficult. It is a peculiar talent which all, even all artists, do not possess ; but it is not a talent of a high order in itself, as village sign-posts may tell us. It is not difficult," he added, after a moment's thought ; "but in some cases, I think it is dangerous."

"More than any other kind of painting ?" Camilla said, innocently, supposing him to allude to some physical dangers to which artists are exposed.

"Yes," he replied, a scarcely perceptible smile playing over his mouth ; "much more. Can you not fancy what danger might in some cases spring from it?" He paused and

glanced at her for a moment; then, uncertain whether or not she understood him, returned to his occupation.

“Do you know the story of the Monk of Camaldoli?” he inquired.

“No,” she replied, shaking her head and playing with some flowers she held in her hand; for though she was not sure what he meant, she felt nervously afraid that something was coming.

“It is a pretty story, but as it is much prettier in poetry than in simple quickly told prose, I must try and remember some lines I once heard. I am not sure that I can repeat them, but I will try;” and after a little reflection, with his usual expressive manner and deep feeling, he began the following lines :

The world shut out—the vows eternal spoken,  
By which the latest links to earth are broken;  
The live-long day passed in the lonely cell,  
Or where the hymns of praise to Heaven swell,  
With drooping eye that humbly seeks the ground  
With closed lip, from whence proceeds no sound;  
Thus severed from thy kind, from thine own will,  
Hast thou with mortal man communion still?

Yes, doubt it not; though parted from the strife  
Of earthly tumult, feeling yields not life;

Yes, doubt it not ; this lonely, silent heart,  
Thus from all human solace drawn apart,  
The power of earth's affections still can prove  
And even here we own the might of Love.

Follow him to his cell—there bending down,  
Ask what the work his wasted fingers own ?  
With eye that wanders not, with earnest gaze,  
Ask what the ceaseless labour of his days ?  
He will not speak ! then watch his pencil trace  
Those features soft and fair,—that young, sweet face,—  
The brow so clear ; so deep, so blue the eye,  
Madonna-like in its still purity,  
All fresh, serene, and calm, and yet the while  
Entrancing with a lightly dawning smile.  
Whence is she ? is't a dream, that day by day  
He strives to rescue from mere fancy's sway ;  
Is it a glimpse of heaven before the time,  
To which his earthly pencil strives to climb ?  
Nay, not a dream—too speaking and too bright ;  
That waking smile—it *must* have blest his sight,  
He *must* have met those eyes so full, so clear,  
'Tis more than beauty that is breathing there ;  
A chord aroused from memory's long-hushed strain,  
The past, the living past, called back again.  
'Tis love—man's love, and, oh ! how deep, how true,  
In the far convent's calm, blooming anew,  
How must he once have gazed—how drank that spell,  
How worshipped once—ah ! e'en perchance, too well !

And who was she, the spirit of the past ?  
Still o'er the world her beauty does she cast,  
Walks she in glory with that angel face,  
Loved, cherished, blest, and blessing with its grace ;  
Or all that heavenly dawn, that faultless bloom,  
Lies it unseen and mouldering in the tomb ?

Vainly we ask. He spoke not of the love  
Which time had not removed, nor could remove ;  
His hand first traced, then gazed his blissful eye—  
His tale is told !—There he remained to die !

Camilla listened breathlessly. She had a very youthful appetite for tales, and the double interest which Frank Hargrave gave to all he spoke, made her listen to this present one with an eagerness which carried her thoughts from herself and from the peculiar circumstances under which it was told.

“How very strange,” she said, as he concluded. “It is such a pretty story that I hope it is a true one. Do you think it is?”

“I believe it is true, and I see no reason to doubt it. If he was a painter, there was nothing strange. Many have painted from memory — many do so still ; and if he was not a painter, yet there is nothing beyond belief. It would be,” he added, with a slight smile, “only another instance of the power of love. Love has made many more curious transformations than changing a poor monk into a painter.”

“I think it curious still,” Camilla said, but she was growing uneasy again.



“Do you now see what I meant by the danger of which I spoke?” he began again, after a silence of a few moments. “Do you think the poor monk’s employment in his cell would have made it more easy for him to banish the remembrance of the past? If he had wished to do so, do you think, after those days of earnest contemplation, it would have been possible?”

She made no answer, nor did he wait for one. Suddenly rising, he turned towards her the portrait of herself, and placed himself at her side.

It was the first time she had been allowed to see it; and while startled at its likeness, she was pleased and flattered by its beauty. With a deep blush, she contemplated it, and though fearful and agitated, could not but say, “It is a great deal too pretty for me.”

But Frank Hargrave was not in the mood for mere compliments. He scarcely heard what she said, but bending towards her, murmured, “Do you think it will assist *me* in forgetting these last few bright days of happiness, if indeed you tell me to forget?”



She turned away her head and trembled ; but her trembling was but with confusion—there was no shrinking in it, and in another moment her eyes might have been raised with full confidence to his;—but Miss Vincent suddenly appeared and interrupted them.

Quick to discover at any time the slightest symptoms of a flirtation, Camilla's countenance was not likely to escape her now. She immediately retreated, and with a peculiar movement which seemed to say jestingly, "I go because I see that I am not wanted," hurriedly closed the door.

Frank Hargrave's eyes were fixed on Camilla. He was intently studying her countenance, and gathering from it the signs that might plainly be read. But he had no wish to incur Miss Vincent's witticisms, or to be forced by her faster and further than he chose to go, and immediately following her, and throwing open the door, he recalled her.

"I was afraid I was in the way," she said, with an arch smile.

"By no means," he replied quietly ;

“Miss St. Maur’s picture is just finished, and I am anxious to have your opinion upon it.”

After Miss Vincent’s unqualified admiration had been given, and very justly given to the picture, she turned to Camilla. “My object in coming home, Miss St. Maur, was to tell you that Mrs. Wetherall has decided on giving a dance to-night. You heard her talking about it yesterday ; or perhaps you did not hear, for I believe you were better employed — but she *was* discussing the possibility yesterday, and gave it up in despair. It appears, however, that in the course of the afternoon she found that there were a great number of new arrivals, and, as is always the case with her, that the new arrivals were all, or almost all, acquaintances. She immediately set to work, and her list of guests is very respectable, I assure you. Twenty couple of dancers, at least. She desired me to give her compliments to you, and to tell you, with numberless pretty messages, how happy she should be if you would grace her ball.”

“I should like it very much,” Camilla

said, "for I have never even seen a dance."

"Never!" Frank Hargrave said, looking at her with a smile.

"That is not to be wondered at," remarked Miss Vincent. "Miss St. Maur is only just seventeen; she has only just attained a right to be out."

"Still never even to have *seen* a ball must be a very peculiar feeling," Frank Hargrave said, musingly; "the idea carries me back to days, that I sigh to think I have forgotten."

"It carries me far beyond my own memory," laughingly remarked Miss Vincent; "for I came out when I was two years old. I was very dissipated in my youth."

"So I should have fancied."

"Why?" Miss Vincent inquired shortly, and a little offended.

"I only meant to say," Frank Hargrave observed, "that I should have supposed your knowledge of the world to have begun early."

"I believe you don't mean anything very civil: but your observation is just. I have

lived in the world since I was two years old, and I very early began to make it my study. I have heard many girls talk of their first ball as an era in their life; but it is an era I do not remember at all. You have a great advantage over me, Miss St. Maur; and I beg, if there is anything remarkable in your feelings, that you will write a history of them for my benefit, and for Mr. Hargrave's also, for I am sure, if I made an early acquaintance with the world, he made an earlier."

"Perhaps not," was all he replied, but he approached the window where Camilla was leaning as he spoke; and while Miss Vincent hurried from them, he said, "If there is nothing remarkable in your first ball, will you intrust it to my hands to make it at least a happy one?"

Camilla blushed and turned away, but as she followed Miss Vincent, the thoughts of the evening, and hope and happiness, were making her heart bound with excitement.

While she was dressing for the evening's party, Miss Vincent entered her room, and

laid on her table in silence, but with a peculiar smile on her lips, a bouquet of the choicest flowers. When she entered Mrs. Wetherall's room, her eyes downcast but sparkling, her cheeks glowing with mingled hope and fear, Frank Hargrave stood ready to watch her entrance with looks of earnest admiration, and to be the first to approach her side.

She excited a great degree of attention; for the style of her beauty, its singular degree of simple grace, blended with a high-born and stately air, was uncommon in the society to which Mrs. Wetherall belonged. Wherever her eyes turned she might have read admiration; she might have heard the language of admiration, had she so pleased it, from many lips; but she heard it not, heeded it not. Her thoughts were centred on one alone,—her ears filled with sounds which made all other language poor; for then and there her last doubts died away, as Frank Hargrave, in somewhat vague, perhaps, yet not the less earnest and passionate terms, confessed that he loved her.

## CHAPTER VI.

. . . . How joy fulfilled  
Makes the heart tremble !

EDWIN THE FAIR.

How fading are the joys we dote upon !  
Like apparitions seen and gone ;  
But those which soonest take their flight  
Are the most exquisite and strong ;  
Like angel's visits, short and bright,  
Mortality's too weak to bear them long.

JOHN MORRIS.

CAMILLA returned home, though wearied in body by unusual dissipation, in a trance and wild delusion of happiness ; and in a delusion of happiness she woke the following morning. It was delusion ; for a little, a very little thought must have disturbed, if not banished it ; but, though a delusion, it was very real for the time. It was like the unclouded ecstatic happiness of a child, no thought of past, present, or future agitating

its existence,—no reflection laying a hand upon it to give it consciousness of being.

It was late when she awoke from a sweet and dreamless sleep; and, fearful of being late for the destined expedition, she hurried through her dressing. No time was allowed for meditation or self-reflection,—no thoughts admitted but such as were excited by the bright sunshiny day, and the soft breeze playing from the sea,—thoughts as bright and sunny,—hopes that like the breeze perhaps were to die away.

Breakfast was nearly over when she entered the room, and Frank Hargrave, ready to accompany them, was standing in the window. Conscious, blushing, and trembling, Camilla scarcely dared to raise her eyes, and sat down suddenly silent, in the midst of an apology for her lateness.

“You had a right to sleep after your first ball,” Mrs. Vincent said, good-naturedly. “You are not accustomed to late hours, as Sophia is.”

“I hope Miss St. Maur enjoyed herself?” inquired Mr. Vincent.



"Very much, thank you," she replied, with a deepening colour.

"You must have enjoyed yourself, my dear Miss St. Maur, if giving pleasure to others and receiving admiration yourself can cause enjoyment. I don't know how many conquests you made; but I am sure that we shall not be the only people who will think with regret of your return home to-morrow."

Her return home!—Her colour first rose, then faded away at the words, and she grew suddenly grave. It was the first thought of her home since Frank Hargrave's confession, since his words of love had fallen upon and blessed her ear; and with the thought came shadows over the hitherto shadowless bliss.

"You are eating nothing, my dear Miss St. Maur," Mrs. Vincent observed, remarking Camilla's untasted breakfast. "Pray, don't think we are in any hurry. If we are off by half-past eleven, it will be time enough and plenty."

"Oh, I have quite done, thank you," she said, jumping up, as if happy to be released.

“I suppose I had better get ready as fast as I can.” And she left the room

“You must take care of Miss St. Maur, Sophia,” remarked Mr. Vincent, anxiously; “she does not look very strong. That rapid change of colouring is a symptom of weakness, and should be attended to.”

“There may be other causes for it, papa,” Miss Vincent said, laughing, with a glance at Frank Hargrave; but he paid no attention to the remark.

“I hope not,” Mr. Vincent said, gravely; and he too glanced, but with as little success, towards the window where Frank Hargrave stood.

A shadow was still on Camilla’s brow when she returned to the drawing-room. The word “home” had awakened reflection, and between her and her previous happiness Reginald seemed to stand, with reproach in his countenance. Never came the thought of his displeasure without a pang; and in proportion to the greatness of her happiness was the sense of that displeasure now. Vague it was and shadowy, even like the

trance of thoughtless joy in which she had been reposing ; but a mist was falling round her, light clouds gathering,—she was no longer in paradise.

Frank Hargrave approached her : he saw the shade, and with earnest words and magic power endeavoured to chase it away. And he was successful ; the clouds dispersed, therown of Reginald melted into air.

They descended the stairs together, and stood together within the door of the hotel, while Mrs. Vincent, who had preceded them, arranged some parcels in the barouche which was to convey them to their destination.

“ Now, Miss St. Maur,” she called at last ; and Camilla retreated a few steps to summon Miss Vincent. When she returned again to the door of the hotel, she paused with sudden surprise ; for within three yards of the house stood Ernest De Grey.

He looked so strange, so unlike himself, that for one moment she even doubted the evidence of her senses ; but the next instant there flashed before her the remembrance of when and where that gaze of sadness had

met her before, and swift as thought, with more than her usual courteousness and grace, she hastened down the steps, and held out her hand. The new feelings springing within her had taught her repentance, had taught her to feel for him; and, with anxious kindness, she desired only to atone for the heedlessness of her former conduct, and the petulance of their last farewell.

“Are you here, Mr. De Grey?” she said, in her sweet frank voice, and with her sweet smile. “I did not know you had any thoughts of coming.”

He murmured a reply; but he received her advances, she thought, coldly, and with something of hauteur she drew back.

The gravity of his countenance increased, and for a moment he stood irresolute; then following her, he said hurriedly—and the very sound of his voice was altered; “Are you going out?—could you let me speak to you for a moment?”

A sudden and strange vision floated before her eyes. Reginald had returned to Clare Abbey; Ernest had told him of what had

passed between them. Reginald had been displeased, — had been desirous to forward Ernest's wishes ; and now armed with his—perhaps with her father's—authority, he came to press his suit.

The idea made her draw herself up with all her brother's stateliness ;—" I am just going out with Mrs. Vincent," she said haughtily, " and I really cannot detain her."

" Mamma is in no hurry," Miss Vincent remarked, contemplating the scene with a look of much amusement ; for to her fertile fancy it was perfectly comprehensible.

" I would rather not detain her," Camilla repeated determinedly.

Ernest seemed scarcely to hear her words, or to heed her haughtiness. He seemed at a loss how to act. Suddenly, however, he turned and shook hands with Miss Vincent, then going down the steps approached the carriage where Mrs. Vincent was already seated.

His back was turned towards them, and his words were unheard ; but Mrs. Vin-

cent's countenance was visible. She became extremely grave; and, after a moment's thought, got out of the carriage and approached Camilla.

"Don't talk of detaining me, my dear Miss St. Maur; for it really is of no consequence whatever. Mr. De Grey has got a message for you, and I think you had better go back into the house and talk to him. Come, my dear!" and kindly laying her hand on Camilla's arm, she led her back to the drawing-room, and left her there.

Camilla submitted, because she did not know how to refuse; but she seated herself with a reluctant and haughty air. One idea only was in her mind.

When the door was closed, and he found himself alone with her, Ernest's look of gravity vanished: it had been assumed only to cover other feelings; but his distress was so evident, that there was compassion as well as petulance in Camilla's voice and manner when she addressed him.

"What have you got to say, Mr. De Grey? I am quite ready to hear it now."



"Nothing for myself," he replied, a sudden idea crossing his mind, — a sudden flush overspreading his face ; "do not fear ; such rash presumptuous words as once you heard shall never pass my lips again." He paused ; "I wish it was so ; I wish that what I have to tell was such as would cause grief only to me. I am sent from Clare Abbey to fetch you—to beg you, at least, to return without delay."

"And why?" Camilla said, haughtily ; but she turned away her head with a crimson blush as she spoke. She paused not to consider the improbability of Ernest's being sent to separate her from Frank Hargrave. Conscience only, wakeful and reproachful, pointed to her separation from him as the one ill to be dreaded,—her acquaintance with him as the one evil to be condemned.

Ernest made no answer, but coming nearer to her, bent over her with a look of intense and tearful compassion. "I am trying not to frighten you," he said, in a faltering voice, "and yet I shall but frighten



you the more ; I had better tell you all at once ;" yet still he paused, as if to watch for a sign of fear, as if to soften,—that first shock of evil tidings beneath which some young hearts have trembled all their days. Seeing at length her eyes opening and her cheeks beginning to grow pale, he went on hurriedly, " Your brother has had a fall,—a bad fall, and he is ill,—very ill."

The cry of agony that rang through the house pierced more hearts than one.

" *Dead!*" she cried, convulsively clasping her hands. " Reginald is dead!" for if the evil forebodings of the young and thoughtless are slow to be aroused ; once aroused, there is no limit to their terror.

" No ! no !" Ernest said, tenderly and hurriedly ; " he is not dead : he lives ; he himself sent me to you,—he is longing to see you."

" Then *dying!*" exclaimed the same piercing voice.

" No, no, indeed ! you may trust me, I *have* told you all,—I *will* tell you all. Can you now listen to me calmly?" and without

waiting for an answer, he sat down beside her, and gently and soothingly began his sorrowful tale.

But when told with every alleviation which his conscience would permit, with all the tenderness of which his tender nature was capable, it was a tale to harrow up her soul, and freeze her young blood within her.

With tearless eyes, with a blanched cheek, with strong composure, she listened to him. The words he spoke conveyed no meaning to her ears; but when, hurrying from the sad incidents of his tale, he began to speak of *hope*, the unnatural calmness gave way, and throwing her arms over the head of the sofa near which she sat she wept bitterly. There are some hopes which convey a sense of reality of woe no crushing narrative of ill can give. Hope — what hope! — that he from whom she had parted in the vigour of life, the pride of health, the bloom of beauty, might linger on a few short years a pale, mangled, helpless, hopeless form.

Her stony calmness had terrified Ernest ; with joy he had seen her tears, and he had moved away and left her to herself that she might weep in peace ; but, wrung to the heart at witnessing such tears from her, whose bitterest had hitherto been but as the dewdrop on the flower, a few minutes only passed before he was again at her side.

“ Will you not try and command yourself ? ” he said, stooping tenderly over her, and taking her hand with a brother’s affection ; “ will you not for his sake exert all your strength ?—he is longing to see you ; think what a comfort you may be to him ! ” But she drew her hand away, and his words seemed but to increase the agony of her grief.

“ Your brother,” he began in a more serious tone, for unaccustomed to grief, he was terrified at the excess of her sorrow, “ submits himself without a murmur to the will of God. I know that it must be harder still for you ; we may bear for ourselves what we cannot for others ; but your grief will add to, not soften his misery,—will you not, at least for his sake, be patient ? ”

“I would,” she said, raising her head and fixing her sad dark eyes on his face, “I think I could, if I had been there; but you do not know how I have displeased him: I was wilful,—I *would* leave him and grieve him, and now I shall never, never see him again;” and she laid down her head in despairing penitence.

“You *will* see him again,” Ernest said, endeavouring to speak calmly and steadily, endeavouring to give such assurance as he could. “Everything is ready, even now; why should you delay?—a very few hours, and you may be there to comfort him.”

She started hastily from her seat, but when she stood up she paused: there, without, was the dazzling sunshine shining heedlessly on her sorrow; there, within, were the signs and tokens of a past dream of happiness—in an hour life was changed, and there were few seeds of faith and trust and heavenly hope to make the change endurable. She paused, looked around her; then, shuddering, hurried away.

Every preparation for her departure had

been made by Ernest, with thought and care, before he attempted to see her; and as he entered the house he had implored Miss Vincent to overlook the packing, and to make sure that there was no delay. The Vincents were naturally kind; and now shocked and grieved for Camilla, showed their kindness with all the tact that true feeling prompts. Everything that *could* comfort or assist her was done; and when they took leave of her with tears in their eyes, their kind and affectionate farewell overcame the little strength she had to resist the violence of her grief.

Ernest forced her to take his arm, and led her down the stairs which she had passed so lightly and happily a short half hour before.

When they reached the door, another parting was awaiting her. With folded arms and downcast eyes Frank Hargrave stood, leaning against the railings which formed the enclosure round the hotel. His attitude, his whole appearance betokened feeling,—feeling for Camilla and for himself.

Far away as were his thoughts from his own hopes, or jealous fears, Ernest felt instinctively that a rival was near, and needed not the tremulous movement of the hand that rested on his arm, to assure him—so swiftly came the knowledge — that that rival had won what he had sought in vain. But Ernest's nature—weak and earth-bound as it was—was not a selfish one. He gave one look of intense scrutiny (a guardian's rather than a rival's gaze), and though that glance might not bring entire satisfaction, felt that it was not a moment for him to exercise a guardian's care. He led her to the door of the carriage that awaited her; then, without stopping to place her in it, re-entered the house, averting even his eyes from her movements, lest he should be a restraint upon her freedom, or add one drop of bitterness to the sorrow of the hour.

Camilla made, however, little use of her freedom. She gave no glance around her, and entered the carriage alone. But thus she was not suffered to depart. Frank Har-



grave had *waited* for a summons, he had waited to be called to comfort her,—he had waited at least, for a wandering glance of her eye ; but now, full of fear and forgetful of all but the parting of the moment, he sprang to her side. She was seated, and at his approach she drew back—but leaning forward and seizing her hand, he passionately exclaimed, “Camilla, my own Camilla ! only say that we shall meet again.”

The soft melodious accents, the passionate pressure of her hand, made her whole frame tremble with emotion — but she answered him neither by word or look ; one moment she sat powerless, stupified—the next, releasing herself even with violence, she drew to the further side of the carriage and buried her face in her hands.

The maid, loaded with parcels, approached and entered the carriage ; Ernest sprang up upon the box, Mrs. Vincent and her daughter, with tearful eyes, kissed their hands to the unheeding Camilla, and they drove away.

Frank Hargrave stood for a moment look-



ing after them, then walked rapidly from the house

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The afternoon sun was still shining brilliantly on the windows and towers of Clare Abbey, when Camilla returned after her first absence, to the home she had left so buoyant in spirit a fortnight before. But even the external appearance of the house bore witness to the change. It looked dreary and deserted; profound silence reigned around, and the grave countenance of the single old servant, who anxiously waited her approach, struck terror and dismay into the mind.

"Mr. St. Maur is no worse," he said, as the carriage stopped; but look and words both were full of woe. He was fondly attached to Camilla, and had approached to offer such consolation as he could; but her appearance betokened a grief beyond *his* consolation, and he respectfully drew back that Ernest might appear.

The first acquaintance with anxiety, sor-

row and death, is a fearful thing to all ; it is doubly so to a young thoughtless being, on whose guarded life no reality of sickness has ever intruded,—in whose tranquil sheltered existence pain has been but a name. Such was Camilla; even common sights of poverty and distress had been hidden from her eyes, and terror, a simple terror of what she might see, and what she might hear, had added its bitterness to the sorrows that were bowing her down. Ernest found her so exhausted with fear and misery, that he was forced almost to lift her to the ground.

He held out his arm, and she clung to him; and so, rather supporting than leading her he guided her through the deserted passages to her brother's room. One meeting she had by the way, and though in that meeting comfort for a future day might have dimly dawned upon her mind, it brought no comfort then; it spoke too much of fear and a troubled spirit to do aught but increase her dread. As she passed down the first corridor a door softly opened, and her father for an instant appeared; seized her with violence

in his arms,—pressed a convulsive kiss on her brow, and disappeared again. Surely, surely there must be a change, if her father could meet her thus.

She stood like one stupified at her brother's door, and yielded a mechanical obedience to all that Ernest proposed.

He entered the darkened room alone, to prepare Reginald for her appearance,—and silent, tearless, she sat without awaiting his return.

“He is longing to see you,” Ernest said, stooping tenderly over her; “and do not fear, he is quite himself.”

He held the door open for her to pass; but she looked up fearfully in his face and clung to his arm. And so he led her to the bedside; but there the sight of Reginald,—no change to terrify or appal, changed only so as to touch the hardest heart,—restored her to sense, to feeling, to forgetfulness of dread in the consciousness of present sorrow; and falling on her knees beside his pillow, she burst into an agony of tears.

Ernest made a sign to the old house-

keeper who had approached in alarm ; and both together they left the room, while Reginald faintly but calmly soothed the grief, and quieted the mind of his young and sorrowing sister.

## CHAPTER VII.

To soothe and calm the bed of death,  
And wing to Thee the parting breath,  
To bid the hearts that faint and grieve  
Look on Thine angel face, and live,  
And love, and succour all I see,  
Father to them, and child to Thee ;

Oh ! more than bliss ! is this my lot,  
My God, and shall I thank Thee not ?

SEWELL'S SACRED THOUGHTS.

REGINALD ST. MAUR had returned to Clare Abbey a day or two before the expiration of the fortnight allowed for Camilla's absence. Arrangements in which Lord Vere was much interested, and which had awaited only his coming of age to be concluded, had called him to London ; and during his stay in London, business had occupied much of his time. But during that fortnight also, other arrangements had been made which led to the fulfilment of one of his many

dreams, and the gratification of his highest ambition. A seat in Parliament was about to become vacant, Reginald had been invited to offer himself as a candidate, and there was little uncertainty in the prospect of success held out by his own sanguine heart. He returned to his home full of hope and animation and vigour. Life, even in a fuller sense than may commonly be said, was opening upon him; for it was a life in which the best feelings of a noble nature, and the energies of a lofty intellect were to be employed. His mother received him with a smile sweeter than usual, and for him her smile was always sweet. The absence of both her children had caused a sense of vacancy for the first time in her mind, and there was even animation in her welcome. His father said little, but looked at him much; day by day love was striking deeper roots in his heart, day by day ambition was pushing forth higher shoots—the fire of youth was kindling anew in his soul, caught from the brightness of Reginald's beaming eye.

Early on the morning after his return, Re-

ginald walked down to visit Ernest de Grey, and together they proceeded to inspect the progress of the works, now for some weeks in operation, at the church. From the moment in which he had first undertaken it, his interest in the plan had never flagged. Ernest's patience had given way again and again before the objections of the architect, the many difficulties, the wearisome delays; but Reginald, with unfailing interest and unfailing patience, had persisted till all were overcome. He was this morning full of excitement, full of ideas, full of schemes for various ornaments and decorations.

The workmen were engaged in clearing away a quantity of stone and plaister, with which a window, discovered only in the progress of the works, had long been concealed.

"How beautiful," Reginald exclaimed, as the form of the window began to appear,—  
"but how slowly they work—I feel as if one touch of my hands would clear it all away."

Ernest shook his head, with a smile and a glance at the not effeminate, yet not very workman-like, fingers of his companion.



“Don’t you feel anxious to be at work, Ernest?” he began again, with unusual animation in his tone, “I have hardly patience to stand idle.”

Ernest coloured, and turned away to avoid answering. Always truth itself, he would not profess an interest which he was conscious he did not feel. Though in some slight degree aroused by Reginald’s return, too conscious he was that day after day was passing in listless languor, and that he had regarded the fulfilment of this once cherished hope with indifference.

For Ernest was miserable and repining still—most miserable, because repining. He could not resign the treasure which yet eluded his grasp—he could not submit to the lot against which it yet was in vain to struggle;—the sense of failure, the weight of humiliation, fretted his spirit, but did not lead him to reformation and repentance,—and therefore no tranquil fruits of repentance came. His heart was in a state of warfare; and being at war with himself, he was at war with others also. Trifling annoyances,

which once he would have passed over with a smile, worried him beyond endurance. His temper was becoming impatient and irritable—he so tender and considerate of the feelings of others, was allowing himself to return hasty answers—to resent the inquisitiveness of his curate, the officiousness of his housekeeper, the mistakes of all about him. At war with himself, his whole life was becoming hateful; the present fretted, the past shamed, the future—a long course of preaching and teaching—a cheerless home—a loveless heart—appalled him; once again he shrank from his existence, as on the dreary November night in his wayward youth.

Reginald looked at him with some curiosity. His attachment to Ernest made him quicksighted, where otherwise his attention would not have been caught. Long and long he had read Ernest's feeling for his sister, and though Camilla had feared to make a confession, he had not been without suspicion of the effects of that evening walk. Hearing nothing, it had passed from his mind, but

something in Ernest's manner this morning renewed it again. His attention was, however, for the moment withdrawn by a fall of whitewashed stones, which brought to light almost the whole graceful and fragile framework of the window.

"Look Ernest," he exclaimed excitedly, "where can the inhuman monster have been born who was guilty of this sacrilege? One can hardly conceive the feelings of those who failed to perceive beauty such as this! See how even the workmen pause to admire!" He stopped, then turning to Ernest continued more thoughtfully, "I am half afraid, Ernest, that this church will be a temptation to me—I do really think, that when once it has been simply and judiciously restored, I might make a better use of my time and money, than to lavish ornament upon it; but my *inclination* is the other way. I should like to have it perfect within and without, and some of the decorations and ornaments that are now used are in themselves so beautiful and full of meaning. I was strongly tempted in London the other day."

“ I think,” Ernest replied, after a moment’s thought, “ that it would be a temptation, and should be resisted. I do not say so because my own taste is in favour of simplicity, for in great towns, where luxury of every description is lavished on private houses, I can allow that something of the same kind may be suitable and even demanded for churches; but in country places it is otherwise—anything of gaudy or rich decoration, seems to me to be out of keeping with the simplicity of country life, and would, I think, be more likely to dissipate than awe the minds of ignorant villagers. I may, however, be prejudiced, and speak too much from my own feelings. To me there is very little solemnity in a richly ornamented church.”

“ No, Ernest, I think you are right ;” nevertheless, a moment afterwards, Reginald was expatiating with much zest on some of those same ornaments which had attracted his attention.

He paused, attracted again by his companion’s abstraction. Having given his opinion, Ernest’s mind was wandering—it was always

wandering, and always in one direction ; much occupation now had his thoughts in speculating on his approaching meeting with Camilla, in tormenting himself with fancied coldness, in imagining contempt and scorn. He was far away, bowed before her glance, while Reginald spoke.

“Are you ill, Ernest?” Reginald suddenly inquired, laying his hand on his shoulder—a movement that with him denoted peculiar affection.

Ernest started and coloured, but laughed, “No, not ill ; I am never ill.”

“Ill in mind then, Ernest,—you are not happy.”

Ernest hesitated. “If I am not,” he said, at last, “it is no matter ; it is not a subject worth your attention or your interest.”

“All things that interest you, interest me,” Reginald exclaimed warmly ; “and Ernest,” he continued after a moment’s thought, colouring slightly, and speaking with some difficulty, “is it quite true that this subject does not interest me?—if you allowed

it, might I not guess what cause it is that troubles you?"

"You might, but do not guess," Ernest said hurriedly, wincing at the bare idea of Reginald's approaching his griefs. Recovering himself, he went on with seriousness, and something of sadness too. "All men have their peculiar trials and temptations, and they are best borne with and overcome alone. Some are of a kind that will not bear the light of day—mine cannot. Do not think me ungracious," he added again, struck and touched by the affectionate expression of Reginald's countenance; "if I thought of your kindness less, I should say more, and thank you more."

Reginald refrained; though fearful of his sister's present indifference, he longed, as he had longed a thousand times before, to say; "Go, and prosper"—but his nature required invitation, to offer even words of sympathy and encouragement.

Roused by Reginald's scrutiny, and anxious to escape from it, Ernest exerted himself to speak, and recurred again to the subject of



the church. In the course of conversation, a discussion arose, which made an inspection of the original plan advisable, and Ernest left Reginald in the churchyard, while he returned to the parsonage to hunt out the plan in question.

The search occupied him for a few minutes, for somewhat listlessly he was turning over his papers, when suddenly, and without leave, his door opened, and Mrs. Cook presented herself.

She looked bewildered and alarmed. "There's been a haccident, sir,—a sad haccident!"

"Has there," Ernest exclaimed, hastily dropping his papers, "where?—can I be of any use?"

She came close to him, and laid her finger on his arm. "It's my belief, your honour, that the young Lord is dead."

How the distance between his own house and the churchyard was passed Ernest could not tell—it seemed as if one step, one single moment, placed him kneeling beside the senseless, bleeding, mangled form, which he



had left in the pride of life a few short minutes before.

As much as ever was known of the cause of the accident and its circumstances, was related by one of the rough, honest workmen, as he stood sorrowfully over Ernest and his friend.

“How it comes about, your honour, was this;—he stood for a while after you went away, then he comed up nigh to us, and after a bit he climbed up a ladder, as I’ll venture to say he never a done afore; and then he gived a shove to them there stones with his delicate fingers, and the ladder went this way and that way, and afore any could see it was back’ards on the ground, and them there pile of stones followed arter him; and it was no fault of nobody’s,” he added reverently, “but only the hand of God that struck him down.”

The stones had been removed from Reginald’s limbs before Ernest’s return, and a single glance told him that even if life was spared, the use of life was gone. One leg was completely shattered by the fall.

Ernest was gifted with the invaluable quality of presence of mind. A very few minutes sufficed to make every needful arrangement,—to despatch messengers on horseback in different directions in search of medical advice, to send Mr. Hervey to Clare Abbey, and to prepare a litter for Reginald's removal thither.

His first idea had been to remove him only to the parsonage, but there was so much of death in the pale face before him, that after one moment's consideration, he decided on taking him, while yet removal was possible, to die in his own home.

Insensible, yet quivering with agony, they placed him on the litter, and so the hopeful heir of a noble house re-entered the home of his father.

That home was a scene of confusion and dismay. The servants idolized Reginald, and stood paralyzed with sorrow. Lady Vere, to whom, with much feeling and judgment, Mr. Hervey had broken the news, unable to be withheld, rushed out to meet her son, and swooned at the sight. Lord Vere, pale,

stern, and immovable, contemplated the fallen flower of his hope, then turned away to master or be mastered by his agony alone. On Ernest the burden of responsibility fell ; to Ernest every eye looked, and every tongue appealed ; and, heart-broken as he was, he was equal to his task.

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Two of the messengers had been successful in their search, and within two hours' time Reginald's fate had been heard from the lips of two physicians.

He returned to consciousness shortly before their arrival, his mind clear and sound amid the destruction of the body ; but, though he smiled more than once, he did not speak.

The examination was short, and immediately on its conclusion the physicians left the room.

"Follow them, Ernest," Reginald then said, in a faint but calm voice, "and learn my fate. I will hear it from your lips."

He followed them. They were standing

in a recess of the long corridor, in deep consultation. A strange flash of childish recollection, coming as such things will at most unwonted times, passed across Ernest's mind as he joined them. That recess had been his own, the receptacle of his most cherished toys, and with the vividness of reality he saw it once again filled with tokens of those vanished days. He passed his hand dreamily before his eyes, to dispel a vision which even at that moment came redolent of joy,—and then in a few words told his errand.

One of the physicians, a stranger, a kind man, but short and decided in his manner, answered him.

“Of Mr. St. Maur's ultimate fate we cannot at this moment speak decidedly. Immediate amputation of the right leg is necessary, to prevent immediate death. When this pressing danger is over, we shall be able to consider more attentively the other injuries he has received. My opinion is, however, that if he survive the present operation,—and, from his evidently strong constitution, I

see little doubt of this,—he may linger for years. At the same time I am compelled to add, that it will be little short of a miracle if he ever leaves a couch again.”

Ernest had expected nothing less than this. There was that in Reginald’s countenance which said clearer than words, never would he rise to life and action more ; yet when the words came, they came, as certainty must ever come, even to the wildest anxiety.

“Forgive me for speaking thus abruptly,” the physician apologized kindly, shocked to perceive the sudden paleness of Ernest’s cheek ; “I was not aware . . . .”

“Thank you,” replied Ernest, recovering himself, “thank you for speaking plainly : it was the truth I wished to hear.”

“You will be kind enough,” continued the physician, “to communicate the result of our examination to Lord Vere. We shall be prepared for the operation in half an hour.”

Ernest turned away. Time for thought, time to ponder upon the terms in which to

prepare Reginald for his fate he dared not allow. With a sinking heart, but a resolved composure, he re-entered the room.

The unfortunate young man was lying as he had left him, calm in his agony. Ernest seated himself in silence by his bedside.

“Is it death, Ernest?” he inquired, turning his eyes upon him.

“No,” Ernest replied, in a tremulous voice, “not death.”

Reginald looked at him fixedly. “Then *living* death?” he said.

Ernest’s only answer was to stoop, and press his lips on his cold damp forehead.

Reginald’s cheek became livid in its paleness. The endurance which the expectation of death and the racking of bodily suffering could not shake, was shaken now. A convulsive shudder passed through his whole frame, and tears,—not tears of sorrow, but large cold tears, wrung as blood from his heart, fell from his distended eyes.

Ernest bent over him, and almost unconsciously murmured,

“*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass*



*from me ; nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done."*

If Ernest's voice was the voice of the angel appointed to strengthen him in his agony, it did not fail in its mission. The shuddering ceased, the eyes closed, then gently unclosed again, as they turned on Ernest.

"Dear Ernest," he said, "I thank you. Yes, this is left to me still ; life and health may pass away, but still I can submit."

His voice was perfectly composed when next he spoke. "Part of your meaning, Ernest, I can well understand : is it to be immediate ?"

"Immediate," he replied, faintly.

"Then you must go to my father ; or does he already know ?"

"Not yet," Ernest said, rising from his seat ; for he had forgotten the physician's request. "I am going to him—I promised."

Reginald stretched out his hand to detain him.

"Ernest," he said, with some agitation, "tell him gently. You may doubt it, but,"



and a flush passed over his face, "my father loves me."

Ernest did not doubt. He had plainly read the signs of the last few months, had marked the unconscious sparkle of pride at Reginald's name; or if these had failed to speak, he had seen the vain attempt of the present hour, the vain attempt to mask in outward calm the inward agony.

He went in search of him. Contrary to his expectation, he found he had left his own library, and, with some surprise, heard from one of the servants that he was with Lady Vere in her dressing-room.

Ernest knocked, and was admitted.

Lady Vere, still insensible, was lying on a couch drawn to the window, and by her side her husband sat. It seemed as if the shadow of sorrow had already brought together those whom in sunny weather had stood apart; for in the position at least there was something of the union and tenderness of a former time. Lord Vere still bore an air of determined composure; but the struggle to retain it was even at a first glance evi-

dent. Those whose feelings have long been subdued and overcome shrink with a kind of terror from their dominion again; and he seemed battling as with an enemy.

He rose to meet Ernest.

"You are come, Mr. De Grey," he said, in a deep stern voice.

"Yes," Ernest replied, and paused. The very harshness of the tone betrayed such intensity of anxiety, that he was at a loss how to speak.

Lord Vere fixed his searching eyes upon him.

"Is my son to die?" he exclaimed.

"No," Ernest said, in a low voice, "he will not die. He may live, but . . . ."

"Speak, Mr. De Grey," said the same harsh tone.

Ernest's lips quivered with emotion, notwithstanding his utmost efforts to be calm.

"He may live," he replied, "he may, it is possible, rise again from his couch to bless you; but if he does, it must be the hand of God that lifts him up, for man cannot."

"I understand you," cried the wretched

father ; “ my son ”—he paused, he struggled to control himself, but words burst forth as with a cry of despair—“ my pride, the joy of my life, the child of my hope will be a cripple ! ”

He dashed away, and concealed himself in a deep window at a distance from where they stood, and there Ernest heard the deep-drawn breathing with which the fight with his emotion was prolonged.

He stood irresolute. Lord Vere was one to inspire awe, not to invite sympathy, and his manner asked rather for solitude than for comfort now ; yet an impulse urged Ernest to seize this moment of comparative softness, and he obeyed it.

“ Why do you struggle against your sorrow ? ” he said, approaching him, speaking in those tender soothing tones which “ the heart heard.” “ What greater comfort could there be to your suffering son, than to know that you love him and grieve for him ? ”

Once again the proud man struggled with his misery, but this time in vain. Tears from the long-dried fountain within burst

from his eyes, and, leaning his head against the wall, he wept.

Ernest retreated from the window, but, after a moment's thought, decided on remaining near him. It is painful, most painful, to stand and watch the outward expression of agony, more especially that of the proud and shrinking, who find in the expression of their sorrow itself an added pain; yet it seemed to him that, however displeasing his presence might then be, it was possible that afterwards it might bring relief to the proud man to know, that vain was his sternness,—*one* had seen his emotion,—*one* had learnt that he could feel.

He stood near Lady Vere, and put back the curtains that the air might blow more freely upon her, and fell into a kind of musing speculation, inquiring how it was that she, whose inanimate nature seemed scarcely susceptible of the commonest impressions, was *thus* affected, while those who could think and feel were in full possession of every faculty of mind and body.

He was thus bending dreamily over her

when Lord Vere rejoined him. He was calm again, but not as he had been; tears dimmed his eyes, and feeling spoke in every movement and muscle of his countenance.

He made a few inquiries, then said, "Return to Reginald, Mr. De Grey. You must be with him, for I cannot. But tell him that I love him,"—his lip quivered,—“and tell him that my heart is broken.”

He waved his hand impatiently, and Ernest left him.

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Half an hour afterwards Reginald was carried back to bed—the operation, (one even more than commonly painful from the manifold injuries he had received)—over. The alleviations for lulling the sense of pain, which have lately been discovered he had rejected, not “sullenly and with scorn,” but resolutely.

“Do not urge me, Ernest,” he said; “if ever I could hope to go forth into life again, I would not perhaps refuse—but now what is left to me on earth but to *bear*?”

And he did bear. Once only during the

painful operation, a groan of unutterable anguish burst from his lips, and that was wrung from mental, not from bodily agony. Once Ernest, who stood by his side and held his hand, feeling the hand tremble in his, and observing his closed eyes pressed together with convulsive energy—stooped over him, and faint and gasping, from his lips he heard these murmured words proceed, “Oh! Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou fallen!”

Much has been said and written on the subject of sudden conversions. I suppose, that taken in the full sense of the word, they are rare, though not perhaps so rare, as some are disposed to imagine: but taking the word in a lower sense, considering it as a change, not from darkness, but from a kind of twilight into light, they are so far from being uncommon, that few have not felt in themselves or observed in others some instance of the kind. As in the physical nature of man, after long illness, and lingering recovery, there comes a day when suddenly he feels that the invalid is left



behind, and he is himself again,—as in the intellectual nature, there comes a time when after long and seemingly unmeaning study, a light flashes on the brain and knowledge is won,—so in the moral and spiritual part of man, it is often on a sudden, a certain moment, or hour, or day, that the truths learned in childhood begin to have a conscious being—that the virtues and holy practices of years begin to have a meaning—that the invisible begins to be visible—that Heaven becomes a reality instead of an empty name.

Such a change—such a conversion—such a *regeneration* as it might be called of Ernest's nature, was effected in the course of the suffering hours of that day.

“Il y a une espèce de honte,” says La Bruyère, “d’être heureux á la vue de certaines misères.” From the sight of the blighted life before him, from the bed of suffering over which he bent, a voice arose which rang like a trumpet in Ernest's soul, bowing him in shame and repentance to the dust, — such shame and such repentance from which fair and fruitful blossoms spring.



From childhood he had been taught, that the world was a place of trial and discipline to the soul; in childhood he had been taught, in manhood he had preached it; but the words were unmeaning in his ears and on his lips,—still he was thirsting to make it a place of rest. For years he had heard, and his lips had preached, that man does not live by bread—the bread of this world's pleasure, this world's comfort—alone; but by every word, whether of joy or of sorrow, that proceedeth from the mouth of God: but for him, the daily bread for which he asked, was the cup of this world's joy. He *knew*, but understood not.

But the breath of the Spirit's influence bloweth where it listeth, and by that suffering couch, in sight of that excess of anguish and superhuman patience, knowledge and understanding came to his soul:

“Awed and dazzled, bending, I confess

Life may have nobler ends than happiness.”

It is not in minds of Ernest's class that such knowledge is barren knowledge. Many, in moments of excitement, feel dormant

powers aroused, and duties that almost madden the soul brought before their eyes ; few deal so truly with themselves as to own their responsibility for the inspirations of such a time. But Ernest, even from childhood, had followed the light that led him, and so was prepared for the enlightening of this hour. His progress had been slow, for opposing tendencies kept him back ; but though failing, he had never been forgetful ; in discomfiture had never been at rest. Often he stumbled, sometimes altogether he fell ; but still when the time of temptation past, with clear eyes and resolute will, he had ever risen again and struggled on.

The thick-coming fancies, the stirring energies of that moment, might fade and fall into rest ; but he had passed a boundary and entered into a new existence, and he would not return again. It might be but a step ; but it was that step which leads from the life of calm and simple sincerity, asking, "What *must* I do, and I will strive to do it?" to the glowing life, which beholding the flood of evil on the earth, exclaims,

“What *can* I do for the glory of God and the love of man? What wanderers can I call back to rest? what holy ones can I bless? what sorrowing eyes can I comfort? what frail errors of the flesh restore with my gentle compassion?” It was but a step, but it was such a step as the earth makes, when from the shadows of night and the glimmerings of twilight, it leaps forth into the radiance of the dawning sun. Many an hour might pass before it attained its noon-tide glory; but the night *was* spent, and the dawn *was* come.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Our life has flowed into its deep dark stream,  
Where silent waters sleep and shades are lying ;  
Our noon is come, and all bright colours seem  
Fading and dying.

SEWELL'S SACRED THOUGHTS.

Lorsque sur cette terre on se sent delassé,  
Qu'on est d'aucun objet la première pensée,  
Lorsque l'on peut souffrir sure que ses douleurs  
D'aucun mortel ne font couler les pleurs,  
On se désintéresse à la fin de soimême,  
On cesse de s'aimer si quelqu'un ne nous aime.

“WITH the unhappy,” it has been said,  
“the happy may not enter into judgment.”  
*To* all indeed, and *for* all the precept has  
been given, “Judge not lest ye be judged ;”  
but if in a precept so given, we may speak  
of a question of more or less, it becomes  
of double force in the case of the pro-  
sperous and the afflicted. If in the days of  
hopefulness and prosperity, when the sun  
shines smilingly on our pathway, temptation

is hard to be resisted,—and who shall say it is not so? — if, when blessings lie like flowers beneath our feet, repining and discontent is hard to be subdued,—and who shall say it is not often thus? — what excuses should not man make for those who have erred and strayed in the days of trouble and misery. It is true that sorrow is a heavenly teacher; that it calms the excitements of this world, and lifts the thoughts from earth to heaven. But it does not always so act on its first approach — it does not so act when it falls stunningly and unexpectedly; especially not so when it falls on those who are uninstructed in its meaning, and undisciplined to submit:

“ Sorrows like showers descend, and as the heart  
For them *prepares*, they good or ill impart.”

The cases I think are few and rare in which their ultimate end is evil; but rare too are the cases in which their first approach does not bring something of temptation to an unprepared spirit.

Days and weeks went by, and the monotony of sorrow began to replace the first

hours of excited feeling among the inhabitants of Clare Abbey. There was nothing to hope, and *in the present* little to fear. Reginald's calm strength and patience — the command he kept over his mind, had prevented the danger of fever ; his strength of constitution had surmounted the danger of weakness and depression. Little, very little improvement in his condition was held out to hope ; but until the constant presence of pain had worn him out, and undermined the strength and vigour of his constitution, there was little to fear.

On none did this monotony of life fall with a more depressing and dangerous effect than on Camilla. Others had their occupations either from without or from within. Pain is a great consumer of time ; so also is the struggle between contending passions, such as day by day was carried on in the mind of Lord Vere ; but Camilla, save her own sorrowful thoughts, had real occupation neither from without nor from within. It would not have been so, had she been allowed to be, as she could have

been, her brother's devoted nurse. It was no office too high for her; childish as in many ways she had been, there was in her character a strength and power of devotion which needed only circumstances to call them forth; and she who had been his constant and chosen companion in prosperity—in adversity would never have been found wanting. But that place, that office, had been—not usurped—for who shall say that a mother usurps?—but taken from her hope, her expectation, by another.

More marvellous in its outward effects than the change in Ernest De Grey, though perhaps less marvellous within, was the change that had taken place in Lady Vere since the time of her son's accident. The love of a mother is one of those unsearchable things which no wisdom can measure or fathom; where human calculation has least expected to witness it, there often the perfect flower springs up. So was it with Lady Vere. The selfishness, the indolence, the frivolous cares which had seemed to form her existence, were —



not extinguished—perhaps, but put away, mastered by one master passion. After two days' prostration of mind and body, beneath the first shock of a first affliction, Lady Vere became at once calm, self-collected, her son's untired and devoted nurse,—that wisdom which she had not, that experience which she did not possess, gathering from the intuitive power of love. No hand but hers was allowed to minister to his wants by day; and, if not by night also, it was because Lord Vere exerted his authority with a manner which could not be withstood, and commanded her to rest. And who could have wished it otherwise? Even Reginald, though at times he missed the more intellectual companionship of his sister, felt soothed and blessed when that soft hand touched his brow, when those soft eyes met his wearied glance, when those soft tones stole gently upon his ear.

Yet a wise mother would have seen the danger attending so weary and joyless a life as Camilla's now was;—the days had sud-

denly come upon her when there was no pleasure in them — and they had come at a time when she seemed least fitted to bear their pressure — at a time when every feeling had been roused, when opening visions of a distant and exciting world had sent her glances far forward to build a shadowy paradise. But in learning the intuitive wisdom of love, Lady Vere had not learned — could not learn to think. Reginald occupied all her care, all her thoughts; she lived in him. She was, besides, a jealous nurse. Even the daily visits of Ernest De Grey she had at first attempted to resist; and though his perfect understanding of such feelings, and perfect wisdom and gentleness in dealing with them, had given him a victory—it *was* a victory. She daily yielded her place to him, and left them together with a smile; but she felt it a daily gift, a daily grace, and it was a grace for him alone.

Left to herself, Camilla sank into an apathy of misery. She wandered listlessly in and out of her brother's room, rarely finding him alone, rarely able to express her

wretchedness, or gather from his lips consolation. Her old occupations were become hateful to her. It is not the unhappy who *can* divert themselves; from those arts and pleasures which charm and bless a happy existence the miserable turn with even loathing away. She was wretched, and none ministered to her misery.

In this sad and softened state of her feelings it might have been expected that those religious principles, unheeded in her joyous and excited youthfulness, would have found an entrance; nor was she altogether beyond their influence. But here too she was unfortunate: the character under which these principles were now forcibly presented to her was not such a character as could win her heart to love.

If there was a fault in the perfect patience with which Reginald submitted to his hopeless fate, it was in the stoical character which it assumed. Pride is the evil ever to be dreaded in the practice of the highest virtues, and the pride of Reginald's disposition was living yet. He had fancied it crushed for ever by the hand that crushed him to

the earth, and guessed not that it was springing up strong and vigorous in the form of un murmuring submission. He guessed not how tainted by pride was the motive which made him unceasingly repeat in the silence of his heart, that, whatever he felt, none should hear him complain; that none should know the wildness of his regrets for the past,—the shrinking with which he thought of the future; that come what might, if mortal strength could bear it, he still would smile above his pain.

Stoicism is not to the young an attractive form of heroism. None could admire heroic characters with more unbounded admiration than Camilla; but then her heroes were men. Self-conquest she revered from her heart, but not that form of self-conquest which denies the existence of the ill. When she listened to Reginald's words,—when she heard him so calmly reason on his fate—she sometimes doubted whether he could feel. *To submit*,—she knew he must—she knew *she* must for him; but what consolation was there in the know-

ledge?—it was the inevitable nature of the doom from which she shrank!

Ernest would have been, nay, was in some degree, her better teacher, but Ernest . . . . It is the painful character of our errors and weaknesses that their effects follow us on earth long after we may hope they have been forgiven in Heaven.

“The Past lives o’er again  
In its effects, and to the guilty spirit,  
The ever-frowning Present is its image.”

When the first excitement of affliction had passed, Ernest found that a barrier stood between him and Camilla, and never did humiliation oppress him more deeply than when this consequence of his moment’s weakness appeared. Whence came the barrier? he could hardly tell. It was not in Camilla, for she, wrapt in other thoughts and other sorrows, had almost forgotten what he could not forget; but it was, as it will ever be—self-indulgence bringing its sure and bitter fruit in man’s chief chastener—his own conscience. He who might have had, who should have had, something of a

father's right to watch over her, had approached her as a lover; and he was humbled before her yet. He who might have brought words of heavenly hope and heavenly comfort, had disturbed the serenity of her soul with words of earthly passion, and even if not so with *her*, the echo of the words were vibrating around him yet.

It was not an irretrievable error. Time might restore the high position he had forfeited: self-control of words and looks, and above all of thoughts, might redeem the past. But evil works more rapidly than good, and to undo is harder than to do. Now when he saw her wandering alone in the mazy walks about the house, conscience, no longer innocent, made him doubtful of his motives, and forbade him to wander by her side. When he saw her listlessly seated in the deserted drawing-room,—her hands unoccupied, her cheeks pale, her eyes downcast in dreary meditation,—conscience made him distrust the tenderness he felt, and he passed on, not daring to approach her with a brother's love, not daring to



draw her from her griefs, and wile them away with his sympathy.

The fault was his, in the punishment Camilla shared; and the consciousness of this (though even he knew not how deeply her desolation was felt) made *his* punishment as great as he could bear.

There was yet another cause which at this time drove Camilla to the solitude of her own thoughts, and made something of estrangement, not in the affection, but in the intercourse between her and her brother.

A violent headache had, one afternoon, displaced Lady Vere from her post, and joyfully and eagerly was that post seized upon by Camilla.

Seated by her brother's side,—happy to have him all to herself,—happy to have it permitted to her to serve him and wait upon him,—the dreary present floated from before her eyes, and once again, for a few short moments, she was Camilla, and he was Reginald, such as they had been in the old joyful days.



She smoothed his pillow, and gave him his accustomed medicine ; and with a smile gladder than it had been, though sadder and softer than the smile of the olden time, forgetful almost of the sad necessity for her cares, hung fondly over him, and asked if she too did not deserve the name of nurse. He saw her abstraction from the present, and rejoiced to see it ; and anxiously avoiding all painful thoughts, went back with her into the past.

“ Now tell me, Camilla,” he said, when at last she seated herself beside him, “ how did you pass your time with the Vincents ? Were you very happy ? ”

“ Very happy,” she replied, and sighed ; then recovering herself : “ how beautiful the sea is ! I could never have fancied anything so beautiful. I should like to live by the sea-side always.”

Reginald smiled : it was the old Camilla, with her fruitless wishes. “ And was it the beauty of the sea that made you happy ? ” he inquired, and he looked at her with a confiding expression, as if he truly hoped it was so.

“Not quite,” she replied, and blushed.

He watched her with some curiosity. “Did you make many new acquaintances?” he asked.

“Yes, a few,” she paused, and blushed more deeply; then, as with a sudden resolution, proceeded, “I met there your friend, or acquaintance, Mr. Hargrave.”

“Did you, Camilla? I am very sorry.”

“Why?” she inquired, and she raised her eyes a little indignantly.

“Because I do not like him, and have not a good opinion of him. I should be very sorry to think he was a friend of yours,” and he turned his eyes upon her anxiously.

“You never are pleased when I am pleased!” she replied petulantly; but then she paused, for as she saw a faint flush of pain pass over his cheek, the trance which had seemed to carry her from present misery passed away, and in a passion of remorseful tenderness she burst into tears—  
“Forgive me! forgive me!” she exclaimed;  
“what a wretch I am to speak so to you;

how could I do it? Oh, Reginald!" and she laid down her head upon his pillow, "how happy we were, and how miserable we are now! *I cannot, cannot* bear it!"

He turned away his head, either to conceal some expression on his own countenance, or to avert his eyes from hers. When he looked at her again and held out his hand, it was with a calm sweet smile: "Dear Camilla," he said, "do not speak like that! it grieves me to hear you say such words. We *must* bear it, both you and I; it is what we have to learn."

"I cannot!" she repeated, passionately.

He said no more then; another thought was weighing upon his mind, and he was anxious to return to it. To divert her thoughts, and give her time to recover herself, he employed her for some minutes in moving books, and arranging various parts of the room and furniture. When he saw her calm again, he called to her, and she sat down again by his side.

"You were telling me about Frank Hargrave," he said, speaking kindly, but in

vain endeavouring to conceal his anxiety ;  
“ did you see much of him ? ”

“ Yes,” she replied, sitting by his side with her eyes fastened on the ground.

“ And did you like him, Camilla ? ” He watched her with intense interest.

“ Yes,” she replied, in a low voice, her colour rising gradually till her cheek and brow were crimson.

“ Camilla ! ” he exclaimed excitedly, “ you did not *love* him ? ”

She made no answer, but her countenance needed no words to declare its meaning.

A blush as deep as hers flushed Reginald’s pale cheek ; it was a blush of many feelings—of regret, of shame, perhaps more than all, of earthly pride ; but Camilla did not see it : in the pause that followed his question she sat immovable, with downcast eyes, and her hands nervously folded together.

“ Camilla,” at last he said again, in the same excited tone, “ you cannot mean it ; surely he did not dare . . . . . ”

“ Why *dare* ? ” —and she raised her head haughtily.

“ You cannot mean it,” he repeated ; “ he did not dare to tell you he loved you, to ask your love, to . . . Camilla ! could he dare ? ”

“ Why *dare* ? ” she asked again, and her eyes were sparkling with pride.

“ Camilla ; surely, Camilla, you would not stoop to such a *mésalliance*. ”

“ *Mésalliance* ! ” she exclaimed, and as she pronounced the word, every tender feeling towards Frank Hargrave, every charm with which her imagination had invested the name, seemed to dissolve into mist. “ No, Reginald ; you need have no fear. I never would stoop to a *mésalliance*. ”

“ Forgive me, Camilla,” he said, and held out his hand, and the momentary excitement over, his head, which he had slightly raised, sank back exhausted on his pillow. “ Forgive me,” he continued, faintly, “ forgive me for distrusting you. I should not have spoken as I have done—it was my pride. My pride,” he repeated, and an expression of intense anguish passed over his countenance.

“ Say no more,” Camilla murmured, bending over him tearfully and tenderly, “ and think of it no more. You need have no fear.” Then observing his pale cheek, and alarmed at his appearance of exhaustion, she changed her tone, and with a promptitude which spoke of strength and decision lying beneath her childish character, “ You must rest now,” she said, with quietness and cheerfulness ; “ mamma will call me a bad nurse if she finds you tired, and never let me come back again. Now rest or sleep, I shall stay here ; but I shall not speak a word.” She kissed his brow, and drew down a curtain, and closed the shutters, and sat by his side in silence.

A forbidden subject brings constraint ; and where constraint enters, peace departs. It seemed by mutual consent that the subject which had so much excited both brother and sister should be recurred to no more. To both it was painful—to both in an almost equal degree ; and by one, because painful, it was banished even from his thoughts. But the consciousness that this subject on

which both felt strongly, was hidden in the minds of each, destroyed the freedom of even the little intercourse which now was theirs.

Pride is in some natures so dominant a principle, that it enters into and colours all their views and feelings. It was so with Reginald ; it touched almost all his virtues, and was the source of all his faults. But in commoner and more versatile characters, no one quality holds supreme dominion, and the ruling passion of one hour may be the very opposite of the ruler of the next. Camilla was proud, like Reginald ; she had a proud and high spirit — a proud sense of honour, a proud idea of ancestral glory and duty ; but in her variable nature it came and went, and, as has been seen, yielded to the temptation of some other ruling quality. On Frank Hargrave's position in life she had never pondered ; he was so different in manner to the Vincents, that she had never associated him with them ; but rather had imagined that as Reginald's friend, he was on a perfect level with herself. Reginald's



slighting tone had roused her pride; when he spoke the word *mésalliance*, all the blood of the St. Maurs had risen rebelliously in her veins — but the pride was evanescent — a reaction came; and when it came, it came as reactions will, with a fuller return to the feelings that had been forsaken.

Her sentiments for Frank Hargrave had from the first undergone perpetual variation; her opinion had perpetually altered. She had yielded to him slowly and after much resistance; but in the ebb and flow of interest, her affections had been more, even than she was aware of, entangled, and pride had not sufficient power to shake her opinion now.

In the flow of feeling that repentance brought, she, for the first time since their parting, allowed — that is, for the first time, consciously and wilfully allowed — herself to dream of him; but once allowed, the temptation returned. The future had never had a place in her thoughts, and now less than ever; for love to Reginald, and principle, and even pride — that word *mésalliance* —

forebade any defined wish. But she began to dream of the past ; she began to beguile the vacancy and sadness of her lonely hours with pictures of past enjoyment — to excite herself with the remembrance of past excitement — until at last, not invited yet not repelled, in waking dreams and dreaming wakefulness, those last low sounds, “Camilla, my own Camilla !” were breathed again and again upon her ear

## CHAPTER IX.

Untouch'd by love, the maiden's breast  
Is like the snow on Rona's crest,  
So pure, so free from earthly dye,  
It seems whilst leaning on the sky  
Part of the heaven to which 'tis nigh.  
But Passion, like the wild March rain,  
May soil the wreath with many a stain.  
We gaze,—the lovely vision 's gone;  
A torrent fills the bed of stone,  
That hurrying to destruction's shock,  
Leaps headlong from the lofty rock.

SIR W. SCOTT.

TEMPTATIONS in their force and power at least are from within, not from without. The same temptation may pass before two persons precisely similarly circumstanced, and while one enters into the battle, to conquer or to be conquered, the other passes on, unconscious even that a temptation has been near. The mind must usually be weakened and prepared, before a temptation foreign to its nature assails it, and there is no pre-

paration so effectual as the previous indulgence of wandering thoughts. It seems a small thing to beguile a dull and lonely hour by the indulgence of idle dreams, by picturing hopes, and scenes, and joys which never can be realized, which perhaps we scarcely desire should be realized,—yet if the consequence of unguarded thoughts be considered, it gives to each one, even to the most trifling, an awful responsibility. Camilla little thought of consequences, when she yielded her mind to the idle soothing, the delusive pleasure of picturing a lost happiness—yet a consequence it had.

Nearly three months had passed since the blight had fallen on Clare Abbey,—since the sight of continual pain and suffering had saddened and depressed the lives of its inhabitants. It was early in September, when Camilla one morning received the following letter from Miss Vincent :

“Carrington, Sept. 6.

“MY DEAREST MISS ST. MAUR,—Though I have been afraid to trouble you with in-

quiries, you must not suppose that I have forgotten you, or ceased to hope for the pleasure of seeing you again. That last morning when you were so sadly hurried from us is continually in my mind, and even when I have been gayest I have been unable to banish the remembrance. We have been on a round of visits, and only returned to Carrington last week. I have enjoyed some of them; and if you are not too sad to be amused, I have many amusing things to tell; but I am glad to be at home again for many reasons: chiefly for the hope it gives me of seeing you. Having ascertained that your poor brother is no worse, I venture to write and ask you when that hope may be realized. I do not like to intrude upon you without leave, at Clare Abbey, for I know that strangers are not welcome in a house of sorrow, but if you can be spared by your mother and your poor brother for an hour or two—(*“Spared!”* Camilla sighed, with some bitterness, as she read) need I say, how very happy it would make mamma and me to see you here? Perhaps you

will write and tell me what you like best? I would not ask you to come to the midst of gaiety and amusement, knowing that you could not enjoy yourself while your brother is suffering; but we *are quite alone*, and unless it is pleasing to you, you shall not even see mamma. I hope my dearest Miss St. Maur, that you will consent to my wish. I am sure you must want cheering, and I will do my best to cheer you. If you can come to-morrow or next day, you will be sure of finding me at home, and alone, for I have had a bad cold, and mamma will not allow me to drive. If you put it off till next week, I must ask you to appoint a day, as I cannot always be sure of myself. Pray do not refuse my request; and hoping that this will find you well,—I fear I must not say happy,

“Believe me, dear Miss St. Maur,

“Your affectionate friend,

“SOPHIA VINCENT.”

Though with no sense of pleasure, Camilla decided on accepting the invitation. The

apathy into which she had fallen, — the natural consequence of an idle and unoccupied indulgence in sadness, — had of late begun to give place to fits of restless irritation, more in keeping with her general character; and though with no hope of amusement, and no desire to be amused, she caught at it as at some new thing, some new thought, to divert the dreariness of her mind.

The carriage was now almost always at her disposal, for Lady Vere rarely, very rarely, could be persuaded to indulge in what once had been her favourite occupation. On the second of the days, therefore, mentioned by Miss Vincent, she ordered it and drove to Carrington.

Miss Vincent received her in her own sitting-room, and with more than her usual kindness and affection. The sight of Camilla, so changed, — so much more changed than she had expected, — so pale, so joyless, so subdued, affected her very sincerely, and she exerted herself to the utmost to cheer her. She was not very successful; yet



having at last caused a few smiles by some vivid descriptions of ridiculous scenes she had lately witnessed, and having elicited a few questions, though evidently more from civility than interest, regarding her late amusements, she ventured to introduce a subject of more importance.

“ Well, Miss St. Maur, I have been telling you a great deal, but nothing, I am afraid, that can interest you very deeply. Have you nothing to ask me that would be more interesting to you ? ”

“ No, thank you,” Camilla said, sadly. “ I like to hear you tell about all these funny people,—that is, I should like it if I could like anything.”

“ But you don’t understand me. Is there no particular person you would like to hear about. Don’t you mean to inquire after Mr. Hargrave ? ”

Camilla blushed, and shook her head. Very truly and sincerely had she determined, and determined anew this very day, to have nothing farther to do with him. To dream of the past, to remember that he had

loved her, to recall those few last hours when she had been so lost in happiness,—this was a very different thing to thinking of him for the future. Reginald could not blame her for what was past; or if he blamed, it *was* past, and could not be recalled; but any future dream was an offence to his love and her duty: it would be wrong, and nothing should tempt her to what was wrong. So she had resolved, and so in her heart of hearts she felt.

“Not even to inquire after him?” Miss Vincent said, smiling. “Oh, Miss St. Maur, how strange you are!”

“What should I ask?” Camilla replied, a little impatiently, but sadly too. “All these things belong to the old time when I was happy, and there is no use in thinking of them now.”

“No use, perhaps; but I think you are very ungrateful. He has not forgotten you so quickly.”

“When people are unhappy, they had much better forget: it only makes things

worse. You don't know, Miss Vincent, what it is to be wretched."

"I know how much you have suffered," she replied, kindly and consolingly; "but I don't think I agree in what you have just said. I don't think you mean it yourself—forgive me, Miss St. Maur; but I think it would be very heartless if you did. I think, too," she added, after a moment's thought, "that being wretched one's self should make one feel the more for others. There are different ways of being unhappy. I don't say that Mr. Hargrave has had such a very sad cause to be wretched as you have had; but still he is very unhappy, and you ought to feel for him."

"I am very sorry for everybody that is wretched," she exclaimed, with tears in her eyes.

"Then you must be sorry for him. Do you know that he never came back to us after you went away? All that long dreary day that we had hoped would be so happy, we sat at home thinking of you, and we hoped that he would come, and that he

would talk about you ; but he never appeared again. We could not think what had become of him, till after two or three days I received a letter from him from London, begging me to have your picture carefully packed and sent to him, which I did. He said nothing about himself in his letter, and we heard no more, till about a fortnight afterwards his mother wrote to ask me if I could tell her what was the matter with him ; for that he was so low and so unlike himself, she was quite frightened. Of course it was no business of mine, and I said so."

Miss Vincent paused, and Camilla got up uneasily, and walked to the window. She stood looking out, and made no remark on the narration she had just heard.

"Do you like to walk?" Miss Vincent said, approaching her. "It is very fine, and our garden is looking in great beauty."

"I should like it very much," Camilla said, restlessly ; "but I thought you had got a cold."

"Only a driving cold, not a walking one.

I have been out already ; and as I knew you liked to go out, I kept my things down here."

She put on her bonnet and cloak, and they went out together.

Camilla sat down on a garden-seat, and leant her arm on a wall near which it stood. She seemed as little disposed for conversation as she had been in-doors. Miss Vincent wandered about gathering flowers. She approached Camilla at last with a nosegay in her hand.

"I have been making you a bouquet," she said, laughing. "I know it is rather like sending coals to Newcastle ; but still, if one is fond of flowers, they never come amiss."

"I am very much obliged to you," Camilla said, with her usual kind and courteous manner, as she took them. "And these geraniums are much prettier than ours. I don't think we have any like them ; or at least, if we have," she added, with a smile, "you know I like everybody's things better than my own."

“ I know you do. You are an exact contrast to some people we have just been visiting, who seem absolutely incapable of discovering merit in anything which has not a match among the possessions of their uncles, aunts, or grandfathers. Their propensity may be a happier one than yours, but it is not so agreeable for their friends.”

“ I can't understand not wishing,” Camilla said, with a sigh. “ I wish I could.”

Miss Vincent came and sat down by her, and, after stooping to smell the bunch of geraniums and heliotrope which Camilla held, observed, “ That is very sweet ; but it is not quite such a bouquet as you held on the night of Mrs. Wetherall's dance.”

“ Oh, Miss Vincent, don't,” Camilla said, turning from her. “ Why will you go back to those old things ? ”

“ Because I want to talk to you about them ; I want to tell you about Mr. Hargrave. Surely, Miss St. Maur, when you know how he admired—may I say loved you then, you could not expect, surely you could not wish, that he should have forgotten



you now. I wish to tell you—he wishes me to tell you how wretched he is. It can do you no harm to hear that,—to hear that he is not so heartless as to have already forgotten you.”

“It might,” Camilla said, and large tears fell from her eyes.

“No, indeed, it cannot. I must speak, or else . . . .” She laid her hand on her arm and looked at her. “I know you never liked me to talk to you about such things ; you never trusted me as I would have trusted you. If you like it better, may *he* speak?”

Camilla blushed, and started. “No, Miss Vincent. What do you mean?”

“I mean,” she said, “that he is here to-day, and that you would make him very happy . . . .”

But Camilla had sprung furiously from her seat, and, while her cheeks were crimson, stamped with her tiny foot upon the ground. “You shouldn’t have done it, Miss Vincent,” she cried, passionately ; “you shouldn’t, indeed : it is very, very wrong of you.”



"My dear Miss St. Maur," Miss Vincent cried, startled at Camilla's excess of displeasure, "I am very sorry to have done anything you dislike. I had no idea you would be angry. You know I never do quite understand you. I thought I acted for the best."

"You shouldn't have done it," Camilla said, still passionately, and, turning from Miss Vincent, she burst into tears.

But passion is but an expression of conscious weakness. The strong, the resolved, the firm-principled, need no passionate efforts to withstand temptation. Miss Vincent understood enough of human nature to know this, and, after her first surprise, was prepared to deal with the displeasure she had excited.

"Will you listen to me for a moment?" she said, catching hold of Camilla's hand, as she was slowly returning to the house. "I really cannot let you go till I have justified myself. I cannot bear that you should think ill of me."

"You said you were quite alone," Camilla

murmured reproachfully, in broken tones. "I never would have come for this."

"We were quite alone. Now do, dear Miss St. Maur, sit down for a moment, and let me explain how it happened. You need not be afraid. Mr. Hargrave will not come near you unless you send for him. He said, not for the world would he attempt to see you without your own consent. Pray listen to me, it is unkind to refuse."

Camilla sat down, but withdrawing her hand from Miss Vincent, leant both her arms upon the wall, and hid her face.

"I said we were alone," Miss Vincent began, "with perfect truth, for we were alone, and we are alone now; Mr. Hargrave is not staying here. At the same time, I must confess that I knew he would wish to be here if you came; in fact, for I had better tell you the whole truth: although I had wished and wished to see you again, I don't know that I should have dared to press you so much to come here, if it had not been for him. When I came home last week, I found a letter from him, saying . . . . I really

don't know what to tell you about his wretchedness—he seemed so unhappy, that I, who am not very hardhearted, was completely overcome, and I believe I would have done anything to comfort him. He said his only hope and wish was to see you once more,—that was all he asked; he said, he could not bear his life if he did not, and he appealed to my kindness to manage an interview for him. It may not be quite right to do as I have done; I really don't know; I only know that when people are miserable, I cannot refuse to do what little may be in my power to comfort them. I therefore consented, and he is here. He waited here all yesterday afternoon, and then went back to B——, where he is staying. He came again about two hours ago. If you see him, I think you will excuse me. I have seen many people very miserable, but I never saw any one so miserable as he is. He does not say much; I don't mean that: he never was a person to talk much of his feelings, but he is quite changed, so low and so restless,—one can see in a moment that he has but one

thought in his head, and that not a happy one. And now, dear Miss St. Maur, tell me, am I forgiven; or at least, am I *excused*?"

"It would be so wrong, so very wrong," Camilla said, weeping bitterly.

"It would be very wrong to meet him constantly, of course it would; but I do not think there would be any harm in seeing him once. I asked mamma what she thought, before I wrote to you, and she said she could not wonder at him, considering that you had been hurried away without giving him time even to wish you good bye. Indeed, my dear Miss St. Maur, for his own sake I think you should consent to see him once; not to-day, if you do not feel equal to it—but some day; for just consider, he will go on building his happiness upon you, dreaming of you, hoping at some time to meet you again, for this very reason, that all is so uncertain. I don't know what he said to you, or what you said to him, but if you did give him any hope, or if you gave him the least idea that you cared about him, how could he ever, how could he be right in endeavouring to forget

you, till you yourself release him? This is only my judgment; he said nothing about it; he only asked once, just once, to see you again."

Camilla sighed deeply.

"My dear Miss St. Maur," Miss Vincent said, taking hold of her hand affectionately, "I am so grieved that your coming here should have added to your unhappiness, but it will not do so afterwards. Shall I tell you what I think? I think it would be perfect happiness to be loved as Mr. Hargrave loves you. Even though I see you so miserable, I envy you."

"You need not, you need not," she cried passionately, "but if it must be so, let him come;" and weeping as if her heart would break, she buried her face in her hands.

Miss Vincent did not wait a second bidding; and a moment afterwards *she* had disappeared, and Frank Hargrave stood by Camilla's side.

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Half an hour afterwards, he approached the window of Miss Vincent's sitting-room,

where she was awaiting the conclusion of the interview. His face was grave, troubled, not triumphant; and when he spoke, his voice was low.

“Miss St. Maur is in the garden,” he said; “she is anxious to go home. I too must leave you, and I do so with deep gratitude for what you have done for me.” He shook hands with warm and earnest feeling, and hurried away.

Miss Vincent hastened to meet Camilla. She was slowly returning towards the house. Her veil was pulled down, but her cheek, flushed with agitation, and her eyes, swollen with crying, were apparent through its folds.

She made no remark on what had passed, but said hurriedly that it was late, and that she must go home.

Miss Vincent stood a little in awe of Camilla on some points, and though she thought it hard, that after all she had done, she was to remain completely in the dark, she felt afraid of making any inquiry. They walked in silence to the carriage. There Miss Vincent kissed her so affectionately, and



said so earnestly that she hoped to see her happier, that Camilla suddenly turned to her, and said, with tears trembling in her eyes,

“Don’t think me very unkind and ungracious, Miss Vincent; or at least, if you do, forgive me, for I am *very* unhappy.”

She waited for no answer, but hurried from her, and jumped into the carriage.

“It is all over then, I suppose,” Miss Vincent thought, musingly, as she watched her driving from the yard. “Miss St. Maur is a strange girl; she is the only one I know who would have resisted Frank Hargrave, —resisted him while she loves him, too; for that she does love him is clear. Well, mamma will say it is a good thing over. I wonder who will be his next love;” and she returned thoughtfully to the house.



## CHAPTER X.

She is gone from me for ever !  
But this remains . . . I can devote my life  
To serve her and protect her . . . Broken hearts  
Have service in them still.—Oh ! more than strength  
Is in the sad idolatry that haunts  
The ruinous fane of their deserted faith !  
I can adore her, serve her, shield her, die . . .  
I pray you pardon me . . .

EDWIN THE FAIR.

A WITTY speaker, in some wise essays of the present day, has given it as his opinion, that when novelists “draw a veil” over particular scenes of their narration, it is simply because they find the scenes, so concealed, beyond the powers of their pen to draw. This may not always be the case, for some scenes are *better* left beneath the veil, and others, no pen, however gifted, can describe as the imagination can picture it : but no doubt there is much truth in the remark, and

certainly it is the truth here ; for if a veil is drawn over the meeting in the garden and some scenes that followed it, it is from inability to describe them. I am unable to convey the persuasions with which Frank Hargrave, a master in the art, persuaded Camilla to listen to him—the sophistry with which he lulled, though he could not blind, her sense of right and wrong—the arts with which he drew her and entangled her, till, bewildered in mind, she submitted herself to his guidance. When I say arts, it is not intended to convey that Frank Hargrave was actuated by other motives than sincere, though utterly selfish, passion ; they were not cold-blooded, deliberate arts, but the arts used by a mind engrossed with one all-engrossing object. Refusing to take, in the garden at Carrington, a final farewell, he wrung from the reluctant and weeping Camilla a promise to meet him once more, not at Carrington, but in some appointed spot in her father’s demesne ; and so on—and on—and on—each time Camilla more reluctant, but less able to resist, until her

consent was gained to that object, on which, not from their first acquaintance, but since their last parting, his mind had been determinedly set.

Camilla had been led, but she had also led herself into temptation. She had entered again into the sphere of an attraction whose force she knew; and now it was, when her mind was weakened by solitude and sorrow, by a sense of loneliness and neglect, by repining and rebellious thoughts, by the indulgence of idle dreams; when her high spirit was tamed by sadness, and the clear freshness of her mind was troubled and perturbed with depression, that a new and strong temptation assaulted her. From the path which lay before her, every feeling within her revolted, and yet still she entered upon it. The weakness of even a proud spirit, a lofty sense of honour, and a determined will, in the absence of those principles which cannot be moved, was shown strongly here.

Frank Hargrave had separated himself from the Vincents, from a perfect con-

sciousness that to anything more serious than a flirtation their assistance would not be given. Mrs. Vincent, good-natured and thoughtless, and guided by her daughter, thought flirtations foolish things, but nothing more. She was accustomed to the sight of them with Miss Vincent—accustomed to see them brought to very heartless conclusions; and yet to produce no very serious effects. She rarely assisted them herself, or indeed interfered in any way, but allowed things to take their course. “Young people will flirt;” that was her argument and defence. Miss Vincent had considered the subject more deeply—could moralize well—could even, if needful, give wise counsel; but she loved to be engaged in a flirtation herself; and next to being engaged herself, she loved to be a party to the flirtations of others, to be confided in, to be a go-between, to assist in making up quarrels, in overcoming difficulties. But with the flirtation her interest ended. When matters became more serious, she was deaf; an elopement, even if better feelings did not prevail, was strongly

condemned by her worldly sense and discretion.

The assistance given by the Vincents to Frank Hargrave's affairs, and his own motives, may very shortly be told.

He had been much struck with Camilla on the day of his first meeting,—struck with her extreme beauty, and still more with the piquancy and freshness of her manners and conversation. He was not without good elements in his character, but he was selfish and weak principled; he was also indolent, (the mother of many vices,) unless when stimulated by feeling,—and therefore he was fond, as the indolent often are, of the excitement that does stimulate to action. He was not very old, and hitherto his chosen excitements had been a series of unmeaning flirtations. He was acquainted slightly with the Vincents, and calling at Carrington, the day after his meeting with Camilla, he spoke in strong and glowing terms of his admiration for her. Miss Vincent laughed at him, assured him that he was desperately in love, and begged

that if he found himself suffering from dejection of spirits, he would let her know, and she would assist him to a further acquaintance with Camilla. It was jestingly spoken, but seriously remembered by Frank Hargrave. Finding his thoughts recurring to Camilla—finding some new acquaintances, in comparison with her, tame and spiritless, he wrote to Miss Vincent, reminding her of her promise. The consequence was, the invitation to Camilla; but the motive for the invitation was a secret in Miss Vincent's breast. To Mrs. Vincent, the appearance of Frank Hargrave at the sea-side seemed to be accidental. Thus he met her again, and every day her power over his fancy or affection increased. He saw her able and willing to resist him, even while unconsciously confessing his influence, and her confession and her resistance both were added charms. He went on and on, still without definite thought or meaning, leaving it to chance, which often before had assisted him, to direct him. Even at last it was only the excitement of the dance, the sight of the admira-



tion she excited, and the fascination of her freshness and youthfulness of mind, contrasted with those around her, that drew him to a full confession of his love.

They parted suddenly, and the words he spoke in parting were the only ones which spoke of meeting again. Up to that point selfish vanity had been his guide; and well aware of the gulf that separated them, his thoughts had not gone beyond. But the heart, even such a heartless heart as Frank Hargrave's, will sometimes make itself heard; and, separated from Camilla, *his* spoke loudly. He *could* not forget her, he felt he *could* not live without her; with the thought of her, visions—in his ideas of happiness, visions entirely new—of domestic happiness began to dance before his eyes; nay, for her sake, he began to feel that even labour and toil would not be irksome. Nor did he entirely misjudge himself in so feeling. He was selfish, thoroughly selfish; but love is the appointed destroyer of that master evil, and once truly excited, all things are possible. Feeling therefore thus, his thoughts turned



only on the possibility of union with her. Openly he felt it could not be, but there was another way. Her position, as probably her father's heiress, was not forgotten—yet to do him justice, its influence was small. He loved her, reluctantly loved her; but still loved her, with all his selfish heart: *selfish*! for no thought of the misery he must bring upon her in gratifying himself, was allowed place in his mind. To one point his endeavours were directed, for one purpose all his arts of persuasion were used, and in that purpose he succeeded.

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One fresh, mild evening in the beginning of October, Ernest De Grey stood at the door of a cottage on the outskirts of Lord Vere's park, on the side opposite to and at some distance from the village of Cranleigh.

"Good-bye and good-night," Ernest said, with a smile, to the old woman he was visiting; "it is almost sun-set; I had no idea it was so late."

"It's a pleasant evening, sir," the old

woman remarked, accompanying him to the cottage-gate and, looking about her; "and if I were your honour, I would go through them pleasant fields of my lord's, far before the dusty road."

"They are pleasanter, certainly," Ernest replied, surveying some rough, heathy meadows in the less frequented parts of the park, well known and much prized in the days of his youth; "and if I avoid them," he added, "it is only because they are apt to lead me into meditations which take up more time than I can well spare."

"It is no bad thing, sir, to walk in the fields at eventide, and meditate on the bounties of Providence."

"It is not, indeed," Ernest said, colouring slightly, as he felt that his meditations would have been of another nature. "Well, I think I will take your advice; and now, good-night;" and he hastened away.

The old woman paused to look after him, till he was out of sight. "I remember him a blythe and gladsome lad," she mused, in silent meditation; "and we used to say, that

whoever was sad, Mr. Ernest's smile could make them merry again. But it isn't so now. He's as frank and as free as ever, and his face as bonnie, as they say in the north; but some clouds have dimmed his bright blue eye, and his smile seems touched with tears. Well, and how should it be otherwise, with the young lord so sad, and the young lady too? Ah! there it is; he loves her, I'll be bound, and why shouldn't he?" Here her silent meditations ended, for as if a negative had been put to her last question, she repeated it aloud and with some vehemence; and, striking her apron and shaking her head, repeated it again and again till she disappeared.

Ernest pursued his way, and endeavoured to turn his thoughts in the direction pointed out by his unconscious monitress. Yet ever as he passed along, and the startled hares sprang beneath his feet, his thoughts, with a movement as rapid, bounded back to the days of his youth—those days whose brightness, no sadness in the present, no dreariness in the future, could dim. It is not all who

have this fair and fresh abode for their wandering fancies ; yet happy, surely happy are those who have it—for though the joys of childhood have not the thought and feeling which animate the joys of riper years, yet are they in themselves so pure and cloudless, that where the breath of their memory comes, it brings a fragrance that is always sweet.

His wanderings led him along the top of a grassy bank which overlooked a kind of dell. Suddenly he paused. What arrested his attention he knew not, but he looked hastily about him, then started, and stood aghast. Not fifty yards below the spot where he stood, slowly pacing beneath some overhanging oak trees, two figures passed along. No voices reached his ear, but the attitude of one was that of intense, imploring supplication. One moment he stood horror-struck and amazed, then hurried on, his cheeks glowing with indignation and shame. One figure, the still and silent one, whose bowed head concealed her from his view, was but too well known

—but too dearly loved—and one moment's thought recognized the other also.

That evening was the longest, the saddest, the most hateful, that Ernest had ever passed. The bitterness of disappointment, the pangs of separation, are as nothing when compared with the pang of such knowledge as he had gained that day—the sudden dread that one, too fondly, perhaps too idolatrously loved, was unworthy of the throne on which he had placed her.

“Something ails his honour,” was Mrs. Cook's remark, when, in the course of the evening, having tormented Ernest with some household questions, she returned to the kitchen; “something more nor common. Don't tell me it's the young lord's misfortune, for it hasn't nothing to do with it. Amost nights I finds him as mild and quiet as a lamb; reading now and again, or writing, or now and again in a kind of a *reevery*; but to-night I finds him tramping about on the new carpet, as if carpets grew on hedgerows; and he minded no more that the new tea-set he set such store by

was broke, than I minds a darn in my old stockings. It's something more nor common, but what it is for the life of me I don't know."

The trampings on the new carpet were not unavailing in composing Ernest's mind and assisting his meditations. Before he sought his sleepless bed his resolution was taken.

It was early in the following afternoon when he paid his accustomed visit at Clare Abbey; and so practised was he now in self-command, that no symptoms of the fever of agitation, which made his heart now bound, now die within him, were sufficiently perceptible to attract even Reginald's affectionate eyes.

He remained with him his usual time; then, without further thought, went straight to the drawing-room.

The door was partly open, and he had entered, and once or twice had looked anxiously around before he discovered Camilla. She was seated in a window at the furthest end unemployed, listless; her hands

clasped on her knees, her eyes cast downward. He approached her, making many movements as he crossed the room to attract her attention, but her abstraction was so profound, that he stood by her side before she perceived him. When at last she became aware of his presence, her violent start and crimson blush betrayed a restless mind and an uneasy conscience.

“I beg your pardon,” Ernest said, in his anxious, tender voice, “I did not mean to frighten you.”

She smiled — but sadly and faintly ; and without even attempting to speak to him, immediately resumed her listless attitude and vacant musing.

As he gazed upon her, so sad, so pale, in her whole air such an expression of humiliation and sorrow — every hard thought he might have had, almost every feeling of condemnation, passed from his mind. It was no happy love that was leading her astray ; misled she might be, weak and wandering, but in her heart, he could not doubt it, she was his own pure and true Camilla still.



When next he spoke, his voice was the voice of tenderness itself.

"I came to you," he said, stooping towards her, "to ask you if you would listen to me for a little while? I have something that I wish very much to say to you."

She got up from her seat — her colour coming and going, her eyes downcast, her hands folded — and so stood before him, a picture of docile obedience.

"Won't you sit down again?" he said, struggling to maintain the composure which her lowliness and sadness almost destroyed: "or will you sit here?" and he drew a chair from the glaring window, and pushed it among the shadows of the room.

She sat down in silence, and he stood leaning against the side of the window, in a position a little averted from her. He dared not stand gazing at her confusion.

"I feel that I am doing a strange thing," he began, in a low and slightly tremulous voice. "You will think, perhaps, that I am speaking where I have no right, where it is only presumption in me to speak; but I

must ask you to think of me, not as I am myself, but as one whom God himself has appointed to watch over your welfare. Nothing but the sense of this, and the most earnest desire for your best happiness, could make me dare to speak as I must speak."

Her head sank still lower, and the blood slowly mounted to her temples; but she said nothing.

There was a long silence—it was broken by Ernest's voice, almost in a whisper. "I saw you yesterday afternoon in the glen."

She made no sound, gave no start, but, turning still further from him, hid her face, oppressed with shame, in her hands, while thick and fast, but silently, tears fell through her fingers.

"Forgive me, forgive me!" Ernest exclaimed, coming towards her, and stooping tenderly over her. "It breaks my heart to grieve you thus; but indeed, indeed it is to save you from misery."

"*I am miserable!*" she cried, in a passionate, broken voice.

"I know," he said, "I know how much

you have suffered, I feel how your life is changed and blighted ; but believe me, there is no sorrow like the sorrow we bring on ourselves, no misery like the misery of remorse."

She trembled, but said nothing.

"You have not considered," he continued, in much agitation ; "you do not know—you are so young and innocent it is impossible you can know, to what this may lead."

"But I do know," she cried, excitedly ; then, as if hardly conscious what she was doing, she looked up in Ernest's face, and laid her hand on his arm. "I am going—going this very night. It is useless to speak—useless to advise : I *must, must* do it."

Ernest was so shocked at her communication, that he sat down at a little distance in silence.

"I know what you must think of me," she exclaimed, weeping bitterly ; "I know how you must condemn ; but do not judge me too harshly. You do not know what I have suffered ; you do not know how miserable I have been, and am still."

“And shall you be less miserable to-morrow?” he said, earnestly.

Her colour went and came, and her heart beat so violently, that she pressed her hand upon it to still its tumult; but when she spoke, her voice was calm.

“I don’t know—I have not power to think; but I know he loves me, and it can never be utterly miserable to be loved. And, besides,”—and, though still calm, her voice sank almost into a whisper, “I shall make one person happy, and that is something to live for.”

“And do none love you here?—and will your loss make none miserable here?” and, though the thought of self was far away, his voice trembled as he spoke.

“None,” she said, and her tears flowed faster, but with more softness. “I do not say it to excuse myself. I know,—I know well what I do; but I have been so miserable, that I can bear no more. I have been so lonely and so desolate—the whole earth is so dark and so dreary—and no one has thought of my misery, and no one has

comforted me—but one.” The last words were after a pause, and in a whisper.

The pangs of humiliation and self-reproach struck like daggers into Ernest’s soul; but for the moment he endeavoured to stifle them, and to think of her only.

“Your brother,” he said, gently and seriously, “can you think of him, and speak thus?”

“Reginald!” and a cloud of inexpressible sadness overspread her countenance. “I am nothing to Reginald now. He is so calm and strong, he cannot bear to hear of my misery. He bears his pain and sorrow, I know, I know, like an angel, and not a mortal; but *I* cannot, and he despises *me*. I have thought and thought, till I am mad. The past makes me shudder, and the future—there is no hope—no hope but one.”

She laid her arms upon the table near which she sat, and hid her face upon them. She seemed almost exhausted with feeling—she was calm and still.

Ernest sat for a few minutes in deep thought; then, feeling that it was no mo-

ment to shrink from speaking of himself, no time when an allusion to his own love could be condemned, he moved nearer to the place where she sat, and began in a low voice :

“ I can understand all you say ; for I have felt such madness of misery myself. Perhaps, if I had dared to approach you, you would have let me share your sorrow,—perhaps, if I had dared to try, I might have made you less wretched. I have longed—no words can tell you how I have longed—to come to you and comfort you ; but I dared not, and you know why I dared not.” She made a slight movement, which, as movements sometimes will, said much ; it spoke of gratitude, and penitence, and self-reproach ; or at least he fancied so, and it encouraged him. “ A short time ago,” he went on,—“ it is but a short time, though it seems years of life to me,—I was indulging (I scarcely knew it then, but own it now) in vain and idle dreams of happiness beyond my reach. In one moment they were destroyed for ever ; most justly de-



stroyed,—but I did not think so then. My life became a burden to me, my calling hateful ; I looked into the future, and shuddered at it ; and in my madness—I dread to think of it now—I rebelled against the will of God, and accused him of dealing hardly with me. And how do you think I was awakened from this guilty despair? A blow fell on one to whom, as far as we could see, every gift of God most justly should have been given. It fell on him in the pride and beauty of his life, when all his health and vigour he would have used for God who gave them. In one single hour, every hope he had cherished, every joy he had pictured was torn from his grasp, and he was laid down amongst us to bear his blighted being in this life for ever. I make you weep,” he said tenderly, as low gasping sobs burst from her concealed face ; “ but should we not think of this?—should it not shame us,—yes, you and me, to think of *his* suffering, *his* dark future, and how *he* has bowed his head, and submitted to his lot.” He paused a moment, then left his seat, and



came close to her. "I know you love your brother," he said; and he laid his hand gently on her hand, and stooped towards her with his whole soul of tenderness and compassion in his countenance.

"You know I do," she repeated, in extreme agitation; "and you must never let him doubt; you must tell him how I loved him when—when I cannot do it."

"That must never be," Ernest said, very gravely, "while you live. You must not, cannot leave him. I do not speak to you now of deceiving your parents, of deserting your home, of leaving it when sorrow is upon it, though these things you will most bitterly feel; but I ask you if you can leave *him*?—can you bear to add one drop of misery to his cup, already so full?—can you bear to think what his wakening to-morrow will be?—will you ever bear hereafter, when you are far away, to know that he is suffering—dying,—and that you cannot comfort him, or be forgiven by him? It might be thus. Oh! think before it is too late."

"No, I *cannot* bear it!" she exclaimed,

starting wildly from her seat. "I thank you, I thank you! No, never shall Reginald have cause to doubt that I have loved him, that I do love him more than all the world beside. But how . . ."—and her colour faded, and she sat down as one without strength, torn with varying emotions, and exhausted by them. "I have *promised*."

"There are higher promises than this," Ernest said, seriously.

He waited, hoping she would speak again; but, though she offered no contradiction to his words, nor appeared inclined to retract her late declaration, she sat powerless and inactive.

"Will you write?" he asked, at last; "or what will you do? There should be no delay, for both your sakes. If you would, if you could trust me to act for you,—you *might* trust me,—I would do all you could wish."

"No, I must write," she said, and sighed deeply.

He drew some writing things, and placed them before her; then, feeling that solitude

might speak more powerfully than words from him, he quitted her, simply saying he would return again when her painful task was accomplished.

He entered the garden, and walked up and down, agitated, fearful still, and yet most thankful. What, had he found her resolute and immovable, his duty should have been, he could not bear to think. Painful,—most painful, most abhorrent it must have been; and he closed his eyes to shut it from his view.

He re-entered the drawing-room in about a quarter of an hour. She was sitting as he had left her, in the same attitude of profound dejection, her head resting on her hands.

“Am I too soon?” he inquired, approaching with a pang of fear.

She did not raise her eyes as she replied to him. “No, it is done—I hardly know how; but it is enough—he will see . . . . Oh! Mr. De Grey, if you see him, tell him not to think hardly of me.”

“He will not think hardly—none could

do it. That, believe me, you have not to fear."

She put the letter into his hand, still without looking up.

"You had better go—it is getting late. Did I tell you where? My head is bewildered—I cannot think. You must place it . . . ." She stopped, and sinking her head lower, while her very neck was dyed with scarlet; "Oh! how you must despise me!"

"I do not—I do not, indeed," he said, with earnestness. "Do not trouble yourself to speak—I will discover him, and be assured I will do all you can wish. And now," he continued gently, taking her passive hand, "God bless you, and may God comfort you; for I know you are very unhappy."

"I am," she cried, bursting into an agony of tears, "and I am so weak, that I can hardly trust myself to think, and cannot tell if even now I am doing what is right. Oh! Mr. De Grey, if ever you pray for the weak-hearted, then think of me."

"I will, I will," he said fervently,—and,

with one anxious serious gaze, he hurried away.

It was nearly sun-set, for the days were growing short, and the interview with Camilla had been a long one. Ernest directed his steps towards the dell, scarcely expecting to find the object of his search, yet anticipating little difficulty in discovering his movements in the course of the evening. On reaching it, however, one glance revealed that all search might be at an end. In precisely the same spot in which he had seen both figures the previous day, Frank Hargrave stood. He was leaning against a tree with folded arms, and was apparently in deep thought.

At the sound of a footstep on the crisp fallen leaves, he uttered an exclamation of pleasure, and turned hastily round; and affection, as well as joy and surprise—Ernest could not deny it—lighted up his countenance and smiled in his eyes.

Ernest saw him with pain, but the fierce indignation which his appearance had excited the day before, had died away. It

was Ernest's nature,—a *fault* in his nature, because any approach to that “senseless cant of charity,” which, in pity for the erring, loses the perception of error, *is* a fault,—to be too lenient in his judgments of the errors of others. His whole heart and soul, indeed, revolted from Frank Hargrave's conduct, but still, as he had hurried along, his meditations had been these: if the mere love of Camilla, the hopeless love, had so caused *him* to fall from honour and duty, what must the temptation be to be loved by her?

There was no haughtiness, nor even coldness in his manner, as he approached to perform his unwelcome task.

The sight of the intruder had quickly changed the expression of Frank Hargrave's countenance; he drew back haughtily, and with a movement as if to bid Ernest pass on.

But he still advanced, and without greeting or apology, said gravely; “I am sent to you,—this letter will explain wherefore.”

Frank Hargrave held out his hand, and



glanced hastily at the direction;—it was in trembling, agitated, characters, and without further study, he guessed at the contents within.

His brow grew black as night.

A short silence followed, during which they stood face to face. A tumult of varying passions, in which mutual distrust and mutual dislike held no inconsiderable sway, was expressed on the countenance of each; but a remembrance of Camilla's feelings towards him who stood before him, more, perhaps, at the moment, than any higher principle, gave Ernest power to subdue the storm that was rising afresh within him,—and there was compassion and regret in his mind as he advanced a few steps and opened his lips to speak.

But at the first movement, Frank Hargrave recovered himself, and no conflict of feelings was expressed in *his* withering glance, as drawing himself up to his full height, he bent his head and strode away.

Unwilling to annoy Camilla by further



discussion, or to excite speculation by a second visit at an unusual hour, Ernest contented himself with writing a few lines, detailing what had passed, and returned home.

## CHAPTER XI.

Nor deem who to that bliss aspire,  
Must win their way through blood and fire ;  
The writhings of the wounded heart  
Are fiercer than the foeman's dart.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

Speak gently to the erring, know  
They must have toiled in vain ;  
Perchance, unkindness made them so,  
Oh ! win them back again.

“THERE’S a letter for you, ma’am ; little Harry James from the lodge brought it here an hour ago, and wished me to trouble you with it ; but I told him it could be nothing but a begging letter, and that he had better not bring begging letters up at this time of night. It’s quite impossible,” the speaker added, with a vehemence which implied a little curiosity, or else distrust of her own words, “that it can be anything but a begging letter.”

This was the communication made to Camilla by her maid, when she came at night to undress her worn and wearied mistress.

“Give it me,” Camilla said, faintly.

The maid gave it into her trembling hand, and watched with curiosity the deep blush that spread over her cheek and neck and brow, as she received it.

“I think it’s Mr. De Grey as makes the people beg,” she remarked; “they never used to be poor till he came here.”

“Didn’t they?” Camilla said, unconsciously, her eyes resting on the letter, which she did not dare to open.

“Won’t you read your letter, ma’am? I dare say that little troublesome boy will be calling for an answer before the cock crows in the morning.”

“If he does, tell him there is none,” Camilla replied, rousing herself, and she threw, with some violence, the letter to a table at a distance.

But the movement rather agitated than stilled her mind, and after a moment she got

up from the chair on which she had seated herself, and said, "That will do, Anna, never mind my hair, I cannot bear your brushing it to-night; my head aches. Good night, you may go."

"But I haven't unfastened your dress, ma'am."

"Never mind, I can do it myself. Don't be tiresome," she exclaimed, with a little stamp of her foot, as Anna stood reluctant to resign her office; "I never will be undressed again, if you stay when I don't want you."

A slight smile passed over the lips of her attendant, but she was accustomed to little ebullitions of childish caprice in her young mistress, and though certainly curious as to the contents of the letter, and though a rumour had once reached her ears that the handsome young man from the sea-side had been seen in the neighbourhood of Clare Abbey, she had no real suspicion; and after worrying Camilla by making several unnecessary arrangements in the room, and very unnecessarily asking at what time she

should call her on the following morning, she departed.

The door closed, and without approaching the table on which the letter lay, Camilla sat down. Now that she was free to read it, she trembled to read it. Fears and terrors passed before her mind, dread of coming temptation. Once, with a sudden movement of resolution she laid her hand on the letter, and walked with it steadily to the fire, but there the bright light shone on the well-known hand, and then she paused, and then came penitence for the hardness of her heart, and then,—the letter was opened and read. —

“I do not reproach you, for I have no right. I know what you would have sacrificed for me; would that our lots could be reversed, that mine might be the sacrifice. I do not write to reproach, but for this only, before I bid you for ever, farewell,—before you cast from you a love that would have guarded and blest your existence, to say, *think of me again*. All remains as once you suffered it to be; there I stand this night, unable to resign, unwilling to doubt you,—

to the last moment of hope, faithful to you. Camilla, my own promised Camilla, can you forget?

“Yet if one doubt is in your mind. . . . farewell. I would have nothing at the cost of your happiness. I write hurriedly. I have not time nor desire to attempt to move you; if it must be so, farewell; and may God for ever guard and bless you, and give you a love worthier than mine.

“F. H.”

Some minds are affected by ardent and passionate expressions; some—and these are the imaginative ones—by a style of restrained feeling,—under the veil of guarded words their own vivid fancies picturing misery, love, reproach, or whatever the case may be, more forcibly than ever passion’s words could speak. There was not much in Camilla’s letter, but it spoke much to her mind.

She read it without a movement or a sound. It caused no passion of sorrow, no outbreak of tears. Immoveable she read it, immoveable she laid it down. Her resolu-

tion was taken. Come what might, she must away.

Let none judge her harshly. There are moments of strong temptation in which deeds are done, which, looking backwards and forwards, the mind shrinks from and remembers with horror,—moments when the conscience leaves its throne, when the light of Heaven is darkened, when

“The frightened, hesitating soul  
Gives her eternal heritage of bliss  
For one triumphant crime.”

They come not to those—rarely, perhaps *never* come—who have walked unswerving in the light of a true conscience, turning from the suggestions of evil, as in very deed from the voice of a tempting fiend: but let crooked ways once be entered—let the magic circle where temptations reign be ventured in though but a step—and they may come, these moments of darkness,—temptations with overpowering weight, with resistless force—how soon none can tell. The first steps are ever free—there comes a moment, and it is an awful thought, when freedom is, or appears to be, lost.



Such a moment was come to Camilla. A spell was upon her, and she had no power to break it. There was neither present nor future, neither friend, father, brother, counsellor in the world. One object only lured her on, and blinded her eyes, and there was nought besides.

She sat immoveable without thought or feeling, till the appointed hour drew near. She rose then, and looked out into the night. The moon was shining brilliantly, and the dark trees and shrubs that surrounded the house cast their shapeless and fantastic shadows upon the silvery earth. It was a scene of beauty and yet of awe, but neither awe nor beauty carried an impression to her brain. She began hastily to prepare—no thought in her mind—no consciousness of the act she was about to do—no recollection of all she would leave behind—no picture of all that lay before her. She attempted no explanation of her conduct, sought for no token of remembrance,—no last look was taken of the room inhabited from childhood, the scene of early joy, of late sorrow. She was as calm, as composed, as

passionless, as if every heartstring was turned to stone.

So she made herself ready—so she left her room—so stealthily she crept along the corridor, the brilliant moonbeams slanting in to direct her steps. So passionless she passed along till she reached her brother's door; an involuntary movement there made her pause,—a tremble, a shivering, passed over and convulsed her frame,—there feeling began to return, in the body first, and then a dull kind of feeling in her mind. She laid her hand upon the handle of the door; she *must* gaze on him once more; she had no power to say more than this.

After an instant's consideration, her hand was withdrawn, and she crept softly back to another entrance. There was an outer room in which the old housekeeper slept, and the door between the two rooms being generally open, she would be enabled, with less danger of disturbing Reginald, to accomplish her purpose. This outer room she entered and passed through it unperceived. Nurses have

acute senses, even in sleep, for the one object that requires their care, but are proverbially deaf to all besides. A touch of Reginald's bell would at any moment have awakened the old woman from her deepest sleep, but the opening and closing of the door, and Camilla's footsteps on the creaking floor, passed unheard.

The inner door was closed, though it was not shut, and Camilla paused when she reached it to listen. A voice fell upon her ear, a voice as of one in agony. She withdrew her hand, leant her head forward, withheld even her breath, to hear. The voice was the voice of prayer,—but such a tone, and such a prayer! Not the calm strong Reginald, soaring in spirit above the pressure of his hopeless fate, smiling above his pain; but the voice of one weighed down with anguish, bowed well nigh in despair. He prayed, not to attain to heights of holiness, not for power to bless the hand that chastened him, but simply he asked for power *to bear*,—to suffer still, and not to murmur, to endure, and not to rebel,—he prayed for

mercy, because even this submission he could not attain.

Such were the sounds, in broken words, in gasping tones, that fell upon the startled ear of the sister who was forsaking him in his misery.

One moment she listened ; the next, heedless of consequences, a veiled and shrouded figure knelt at the foot of the bed.

“Forgive me,” she cried, “forgive me ; —oh ! Reginald, forgive.”

“Camilla ! ” he said, fearfully.

“Oh ! Reginald, why was I never to know, why was I never to comfort you ? Why did you cast me off, and make me think you could not feel even your own misery ? ”

“Camilla,” he said again, in the same whispered, fearful tone, “what is this ? how came you here ? ”

She raised her head from his bed, and looked at him. It was the face of one who had gone through great tribulation — the bright lamp fell on his wan cheek, on his knitted brow, on his hair hanging damp

and matted upon his temples—large drops hung round his eyes, and tremulous movements still quivered on his lips. She gazed, awestruck — her own misery, which she had thought insupportable, paled and grew dim before that “mighty agony.”

“Oh ! Reginald,” she said again, and again hid her face upon his bed.

But he was recovering himself. With a few struggles, he regained his usual composure, and, stretching out his hand, said, calmly, “Come nearer, Camilla.”

“I dare not,” she cried, weeping bitterly, “till you have forgiven me.”

“Camilla !” he exclaimed, shuddering and agitatedly, “have my fears — has my dreadful presentiment come true?”

“It has, it has !” she said, bowing down her head with shame before him ; but the next moment, “no, no ; it has not—it never shall ;” and, rising from her knees, with a kind of passionate disgust, she cast her bonnet and cloak upon the ground.

“Come nearer, Camilla,” her brother repeated, and there was a tone of grave and

calm authority in his voice which she dared not withstand.

She obeyed, calmed, but trembling.

“Now, sit down and tell me all — all, Camilla : I must know all.”

And again obediently she seated herself by his bedside, and began her narrative.

It was simply and truthfully told. The facts were stated, and the condition of mind that produced them, without excuses, without comment, without attempt at extenuation. Suddenly her conduct, — its long course of error, — stood revealed in its true colours ; — suddenly she saw that misery, however great, alters not the character of guilt.

Reginald listened, with his eyes fixed upon her countenance — listened steadily, without sound or movement ; but when the narrative was concluded, he turned his face away, and, while an expression of intense anguish convulsed his features, he murmured, “It meets me still — my pride, my pride ! You ask me to forgive you,” he continued, after a short silence, again turning towards his



sister. "Ah! Camilla, it is you who have to forgive. I have been wrapt in myself, in my own suffering; the pride of submission has led me astray. I would not that you — that any one should know, that *I* could not bear—that I shrank from my body's pain, my mind's misery. I have been full of my proud self, and have had no room to think of you, dearest Camilla, and your blighted life." And softer, humbler tears than ever, from childhood upwards, he had shed, strayed penitently from his trembling eyelids.

"And do you love me, then?" she said, laying her head on his pillow; "and do you suffer, and will you let me comfort you? and will you forgive me for my madness and my wickedness? and shall we be happy again as we used to be?"

He drew her towards him, and kissed her silently. The errors of others as well as our own are great teachers. The wanderings of his young sister taught him, with a fulness which nothing, perhaps, besides could have done, the deep root of the evil



in his own heart. But his own confessions were for silence; he spoke them not then.

“You must go now, Camilla,” he said, after a moment’s thought, recovering all his self-possession; “Watson must not find you and these things,” glancing with a hasty expression at her scattered walking dress; “here—go to bed and to sleep, and to-morrow we will speak of this again.”

She got up humbly and obediently, and collected her things together. She read the thoughts in his mind, the shame she had caused to his lofty nature: she was humbled to the dust.

“Camilla,” he called, as she was slowly leaving the room.

She approached his bed again, and stood with downcast eyes before him.

He held out his hand, and while he took hers, looking fixedly at her, said, “Thank God, Camilla, before you sleep, for having saved you from a sorrow which would, I well know, have embittered your whole life. If you had forsaken us, I feel it, I should have died!”

She raised her eyes with a glance of penitence and sorrow, which words could not have spoken—which she did not dare to speak—then gently and noiselessly crept from the room.

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On the afternoon of the following day, Ernest sat as usual by Reginald's bedside. No allusion to what had passed was made on either side. Ernest observed, that Reginald was more than commonly silent; that he listened to his reading without comment; that an expression of more than usual depression was on his countenance, and he wondered if any confession had been made; but nothing was said.

Suddenly there was a low tap at the door, and Camilla slowly entered. Ernest rose from his seat, but something in her appearance kept him still, and he waited *her* greeting, instead of meeting her as he would commonly have done with his own.

She crossed the room with hesitating steps and downcast eyes, but till she reached

him, her pale cheek gained no tint of colour. She paused when she stood before him and held out her hand, and then the blood slowly and gradually mounted, till it was visible in the very roots of her hair, in the very tips of her fingers.

“Did you pray for the weak-hearted last night, Mr. De Grey?” she said, in a low voice.

“I did,” he replied earnestly, gazing upon her drooping figure with a tenderness so deep, that even in *his* heart it seemed like a new sensation.

“Then perhaps you saved me,” she said, turning from him, and seating herself on a low chair by Reginald’s couch,—“saved me from breaking Reginald’s heart and my own also, I forgot your warning, I broke my promise, I forgot my duty, and Reginald and my home—I was saved, but I am wretched, and guilty, and miserable.”

Her head sank on her brother’s bed—her long golden curls, which had used to float so joyously in the wind, lay streaming loosely and dishevelled around her. Her attitude was the picture of dejection and humility.

Urged by an impulse which he did not pause to consider, nor attempt to resist, Ernest approached her, and stooped over her; and laying his hand upon her bowed and humbled head, slowly and reverently spoke that blessing, which has been appointed for the especial consolation of the hours of suffering and penitence :

*“Unto God’s gracious mercy and protection I commit thee. The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, both now and evermore.”*

He ceased, and seated himself for an instant by the bedside—then rising again, and silently returning the affectionate pressure of the hand Reginald held out to him, he left the room.

It is sometimes given to single actions, even perhaps involuntary ones, to acquire a force, a dignity, a meaning, far beyond their original intention—to become in some sort sacraments, sealing a state of mind that has gone before, signing a state of mind that is to follow.

This simple action of Ernest's, this simple assumption of authority, had something of this nature. If hitherto his office had not been respected, if the influence of his sacred calling had not been allowed as it should have been, the fault was his own, and not Camilla's. Her mind was peculiarly formed to reverence and respect what she felt to be above her—but Ernest, from the moment of their first acquaintance, had placed himself beneath her feet ;—he had made himself the slave of her caprice, had suffered himself to be guided by her whims and fancies, not indeed to any actions incompatible with his duty, yet to such a life of forgetfulness, as made his sins of omission many in number. His truth, his principle, his many virtues, she did truly reverence from her heart ; but she did not feel, it was impossible that she could feel, that he was other than a being tied and bound with earthliness like herself.

In the restraint which Ernest of late had imposed on himself — in the deepened seriousness and self-collectedness of his

manner, even in the estrangement between them, a new state of things had been growing up; but it had grown imperceptibly, neither were fully conscious of it; it needed some action, perhaps, to give it a definite form—such an action as he had then performed;—in a moment their situations appeared to be reversed, his position to have righted itself—his character to have acquired the influence and authority which his office age and experience should naturally have given him over a young and thoughtless girl.

And, more than this—as Ernest walked alone he felt, with a bound of the heart, that an object long striven for was attained. Suddenly his struggles seemed to be over—his conscience at rest; he seemed to have gained the right to watch over her—the power, undoubting of his motive, to approach her; to share her sorrow, to comfort, to bless, to guide. Self—selfish hopes and fears seemed to have passed away.

## CHAPTER XII.

In easier hours it may be I had cause,  
This time or that, to wish thy boldness less :  
Though trusting still that time, which tempers all,  
Would bring thee soberer thoughts and tame thy heart.  
What time to tardy consummation brings,  
Calamity most like a frosty night,  
That ripeneth the grain,—completes at once.

PHILIP VON ARTEVELDE.

FOUR months glided slowly and sadly by. The dreary winter passed, and gleams of spring began to appear.

On one of those fine spring-like, almost summer-like days which occasionally astonish our minds in the month of February, in spite of warnings and yearly disappointments, exciting hopes that winter is at an end, and the joys of summer at hand, Ernest De Grey, animated by the softness of



the air, set off to pay a long-delayed visit to a house at a distance of several miles from Cranleigh.

The beauty of the day appeared to have drawn together a number of other visitors ; for on entering the drawing-room, Ernest was bewildered by the sight of many heads, and the sound of many tongues ; and finding his hostess too much engaged to need his attentions, he withdrew, nothing loth, and seated himself near a window.

On looking about him and attempting to penetrate the crowd, he perceived that Mrs. and Miss Vincent were among the visitors. Miss Vincent looked smilingly at him, but having something extremely like an antipathy to her, he contented himself with a distant bow, and remained in his original station.

Miss Vincent was not, however, to be avoided. Before long, she extricated herself from a tedious proser who was pouring tales into her ear, and moved to a sofa near the window, at which Ernest had placed himself.

"You would not come to me," she observed, with a smile, "so I must come to you."

Ernest said nothing, which was not very civil; but he had nothing to say.

"I am so glad to have met you this morning," she began, speaking in another tone, "for I know nothing of what is going on at Clare Abbey. It is five months at least since I have seen Miss St. Maur. How is she?"

"She is quite well in health," Ernest replied, "but, as you may suppose, not much inclined for amusement. She is almost always with her brother."

"Poor thing! How changed her life is;—this time last year she was like a bird, so joyous and animated."

Ernest's countenance acquiesced in what she said; but he made no remark.

"And Mr. St. Maur—what do you think of him? The sadness of his existence is a thing I hardly like to think of."

She spoke with so much, with such real interest and feeling, that Ernest was ashamed

of his coldness, and almost surprised out of his antipathy.

"There is little change," he replied, answering her as he really felt, and as one who desired to know; "and indeed since all hope of improvement has been given up, the only change that can now be looked for must be for . . . . I cannot say for the worse," he said, stopping himself: "even those who love him best could not call the change that awaits him so. I sometimes think," he added, after a moment's thought, "that I perceive symptoms of declining—he seems to me weaker than he was; but when one is watching very anxiously, one is apt to fancy; and I do not hear that the physician who attends him is of that opinion."

"And do you say that Miss St. Maur is always with him?"

"She is with him very constantly, — and I think, with her own will, would never be absent."

"I wonder if she would see me, if I called upon her?"

Ernest was silent. He did not fancy that Camilla had any desire for Miss Vincent's society.

"Don't you think," she continued, "that a little change, a little diversion of mind might do her good? It seems to me that such entire seclusion must be dangerous. I have sometimes heard that a fixed unhappiness at so early an age, produces serious consequences on the mind. I could not of course do much, but at any rate my visits would make a change,—and I am sure I would do my best to cheer her."

"I believe you are right," Ernest said, after a moment's consideration, in which the truth of Miss Vincent's observations struck him very forcibly. "I don't think any persuasions would induce Miss St. Maur to go as far as to Carrington; but if you could occasionally call on her at Clare Abbey, it might be of great service to her."

"I certainly will, and very shortly."

There was a short silence; and when Miss Vincent resumed the conversation, it was in a different tone and on a different subject.

She was rather a curious mixture; the proportions at least of sense and feeling, and artifice and folly, were more curiously blended in her mind than is at all common. Ernest was completely puzzled by her.

"I have heard a piece of news this morning," she began, with a peculiar smile, "which I confess has surprised me, and which I believe will interest Miss St. Maur. You know Mr. Frank Hargrave, of course?"

"I have seen him," Ernest said, coldly.

"And you know, I suppose, how very, very desperately in love he was with Miss St. Maur when she was with us last summer?"

He made a movement of acquiescence.

"Well, I have heard this morning that he is going to be married."

Ernest was on his guard, and showed but little of the extreme astonishment he felt.

"I am surprised," she went on; "because though I have had a good deal of experience in common flirtations, and have seen how very shortly the most violent ones are brought to an end and forgotten, I did not

look on this as a common flirtation. I *never* saw a person more deeply and sincerely attached to another than Mr. Hargrave was to Miss St. Maur."

"His sincerity is somewhat strangely shown," Ernest said, with sarcasm unusual to him: "I should hardly have supposed that Miss St. Maur was a person who could so quickly have been forgotten."

"I agree with you there. She is the most taking girl I ever met with,—so fresh and unsophisticated,—we were all quite charmed with her; and the fact is, Mr. Hargrave agrees with us also. I have heard," she continued, in a confidential tone, "from a friend, some circumstances of the case; and my belief is that he has not forgotten her in the least."

Ernest would not inquire into these circumstances; but his silence expressed sufficient interest to encourage her to proceed.

"You know last year,—or perhaps you don't know?—but last autumn, after . . ." she hesitated . . . "after Mr. Hargrave and Miss St. Maur were separated, he disap-



peared: no one could tell what had become of him. His mother was in great anxiety, and wrote to make inquiries of me; but I knew nothing beyond the fact that he was separated from Miss St. Maur, and that he was heartbroken in consequence; and this being his affair, I had no right to relate. It afterwards appeared that he was travelling about, alone; as he is apt to do, when he is attacked by the fits of disgust to the world's ways, or his own ways," she said, laughingly, "to which he is liable. He was heard of in Wales, and in Cornwall, and several out-of-the-way places,—in short, he completely retired from society for two or three months. That, I think, was tolerable proof of sincerity! Well, about six weeks ago he sprained his ankle,—was found on the road, in some strange country, by a kind-hearted gentleman, who insisted on taking him home to his house. There Mr. Frank Hargrave became domesticated; and there he met with a niece or daughter, who was also very kind to him. He was, I hear, at the time in wretched spirits; but, you know, Mr. Har-



grave, charming as he is, has one fault,—he never can resist a flirtation: so being constantly thrown into the society of this young lady, he began to pay her some attentions,—meaning nothing, of course. It appears, however, that she is pretty, and well off; and being (as indeed most girls are to whom he condescends to pay attention) desperately in love with him, it is to end in a marriage. My friend tells me,—and I dare say after all it will prove to be the case,—that it promises to be a very happy one.”

Ernest made no comment; but his countenance expressed a good deal of the contempt and disgust he felt at her narrative.

“You seem to doubt the happiness of the prospects?” she said, with a smile.

“I confess,” he said, with emphasis, “I think them more than doubtful.”

“You are mistaken. How this particular case may turn out, of course nothing but time can show; but I have seen very happy marriages, under circumstances not very dissimilar. You know it is an old and often-

repeated opinion, that wild young men make the best husbands."

"It is no doubt sometimes possible," Ernest said, gravely; "but it is an opinion which I should not have expected,—which I am sorry to hear you mention with approval."

"I only tell you what I have been told," she answered, lightly, provoked with him for his gravity. "But no matter now—you and I had better not enter into moral disquisitions; for I feel instinctively that our views would differ widely. I want to know something of more importance. Tell me about Miss St. Maur. I hardly know in what degree she will be affected by this marriage. That she was very much taken with Frank Hargrave I saw plainly from the first, and I afterwards thought it went beyond what that phrase implies; but still she resisted him: and since she had power to do so, I hope it may be an interest to her, and no more. What is your opinion?"

"I cannot think I have any right to spe-

culate on Miss St. Maur's feelings," Ernest said, very coldly.

Miss Vincent bit her lip; and, to punish him, immediately observed, with some archness, "And yet I should have supposed the speculation would have interested you?"

He paid no attention to her words, nor appeared to understand her insinuation.

"I hope Mr. De Grey," she began again, after a short silence, "that you will not forestall my communication. I fancy I read indiscretion in your countenance. Now tell me honestly, do you mean to be beforehand with me?"

"I certainly do," he said, steadily, "if I have an opportunity."

"I was more unwise than I usually am to trust you with my news. I ought to have bound you over by a promise of secrecy. Don't you see that, to make such a piece of news palatable, it will require the consideration and enforcement of many alleviating circumstances? and these I can hardly hope *you* will dwell upon as they should be. I am afraid," she continued, less lightly, exa-

mining his countenance as she spoke, "that you think it will do more than *interest* Miss St. Maur."

"Miss Vincent," Ernest said, raising his eyes with a look of grave reproach, "if, as you say, you have reason to suppose Miss St. Maur was sincerely attached to Mr. Hargrave, is this a fit subject for your jesting?—and if circumstances have allowed me to form an opinion, are her feelings a subject on which I have a right to speak?"

"You make so much of it," she said, half playfully, half apologizing; "I cannot look so very seriously on a flirtation."

"It does not, I hope, need very serious consideration," Ernest replied, coldly; "but if it does not,—if, at least, I understand you rightly,—it is not Mr. Hargrave's fault."

"Oh he is a great flirt, and I don't mean to defend him; but so are a thousand others, and not half such agreeable ones as he is. But don't look so grave,—you quite frighten me. I ought to have been more upon my guard in what I said to you; for I could hardly suppose you would be an *unconcerned*

hearer in anything that touched Miss St. Maur's welfare."

"You are right," he said, quietly, rising from his seat as he spoke, but not from any desire to escape the look of arch scrutiny that was fastened upon him. Miss Vincent's endeavours were not rewarded by producing the faintest flush of consciousness upon his cheek.

When two characters very much opposed to each other meet on subjects where character is shown, they are most probable to go to extremes. The extreme of Ernest's character could not but be good; for it was of that nature which, the more deeply it is penetrated, the more its intrinsic truth and worth is shown; but certainly Miss Vincent, in her irritation at his gravity and discretion, had shown herself to little advantage. He left her with a feeling of profound disgust.

He rode through the park of Clare Abbey on his way to the house, and, passing under the terrace, saw through one of the vistas that Camilla was walking pensively along

the gravel walk on the upper part of the lawn. He tied his horse to a tree, patting it with well-understood command to be patient and still, and entered the lawn at a small gate on the outside.

Camilla heard his approach, and turned to meet him.

"I am so glad to see you out this fine day," he said, looking anxiously at her pale cheeks.

"The sun shone so brightly into Reginald's room, he forced me away from him," she replied, with a slight smile.

Instead of proceeding with her walk, she stood still, and Ernest soon observed the direction in which her eyes were turned, and observed interest in their gaze.

"Are you looking at my horse?" he inquired, with a smile.

"Yes," she said, and smiled also, but faintly; and the smile was followed by a sigh, and she turned away.

He walked by her side a little way in silence, then said, "I know what you were thinking: your thoughts had flown to the

happy old times, and you felt how hard it was not to wish them back again."

"Yes," she said again, in a low voice, but said no more.

A great change had come over her in the last few months; a stillness, the token of a deeper change within, had stolen over her fitful and animated manner. Her feelings and opinions, formerly so excitedly spoken, were now dwelt on in silence, or breathed only to the ears of Reginald. Serenity and happiness might come again; but her first fresh youth was past,—and, once past, comes no more. It was with her an early day to lose it; but sorrow brings much experience, and error, more.

"I suppose," Ernest said, with a sigh,—for he was not perfect in the lesson himself,—“I suppose it is impossible entirely and at all times to subdue such a wish, but I do begin to feel, what once I could not understand, how much of good comes out of evil. When I see your home now, even sorrowful as it is, I cannot but think of this. If sorrow has come, sorrow has brought with it your



father's love; and I am sure you feel that, even bought at such a cost, it is a precious gift."

"Yes," Camilla said, gently; and if the tones of her voice had lost their ringing clearness, they had a softness now unknown to them before. "Indeed, Mr. De Grey, I feel, or try to feel, the truth of what you say. Reginald says, that when papa sits by his bed, he feels that he has all earth can give, and would not, if he could, recall . . ." She did not conclude her sentence, and walked on in silence.

"Where have you been riding to?" she inquired, after a moment, as the course of their walk brought them back again to the sight of Ernest's patient horse.

"I have been to call on old Mrs. Temple—a visit delayed longer than it should have been, for she was very kind to me when I was a child, and I ought not to forget." He paused, for he felt that the time was come when his communication must be made; and though when distant he had felt that it should be made by none but him, he shrank from his self-imposed task now.

"I met Miss Vincent," he began at last; "she was calling there with her mother."

Camilla blushed, but forced herself to say, "Did you talk to her?—you don't like her, I know."

"She talked a good deal to *me*," he said; and paused.

His voice had a peculiar tone—it was meant to attract her attention, and she looked up; but on meeting his anxious serious gaze, she turned hastily away again.

"She told me some news which she said would interest you . . . . I fear it will—I fear it may give you pain . . . . but I came here to tell it."

They had reached a garden seat at one end of the terrace, and Camilla sat down, and turned away her head to conceal her trembling limbs and agitated countenance.

"It concerns one . . . ." he hesitated: "it concerns Mr. Hargrave;—he has proved himself unworthy indeed. Shall I tell you all I have heard?"

She bowed her head.

"Miss Vincent tells me that he is going

to be married : peculiar circumstances, she says, have led to it—you shall hear them, if you please, now or at some other time.”

She listened to him in silence, but not therefore unmoved ;—there was no expression of pride, or disdain, or scorn, but through her fingers large tears fell heavily on the garden wall.

Ernest looked at her intently; and feelings, long subdued within him, agitated his soul—anger, and jealousy, and unspeakable envy ; such tears for *him*,—for him so unworthy of her,—he felt he would have died to purchase one of them.

He walked hastily to the further end of the terrace to control, to subdue himself ; but intense anxiety permitted him but a short absence, and again he stood at her side.

“I feared I should give you pain,” he said, stooping tenderly over her ; “but you must not, indeed you must not grieve—he is unworthy.”

“He never loved me,” she murmured, while he could see on her bending throat, the flush of shame and humiliation ; “I might

have given up all for him, and he never loved me."

"He did love you," Ernest said, firmly and expressively, "*that* you must not, should not doubt—I saw him, and even then, when I could not but condemn, I felt that he loved you truly, and I pitied him. But he was selfish in his love; and such selfish love a fresh temptation may quickly overcome."

She said nothing; but after a moment, got up from her seat, and walked towards the house.

Ernest went a few steps with her, then stopped and held out his hand. He saw that she was so bowed with humiliation that any common sympathy, even the tenderest, was oppressive and misplaced. She gave him her hand without raising her eyes.

"May I say one thing to you, before I go?" he asked, as he held it.

"Yes, *anything*," she replied, gently.

"When you are tempted to feel sad, and desolate, and forsaken, will you promise me to think of the love and care of God, which has preserved you from a life of misery?"

Surely you may, surely you should feel that His especial providence watched over you and preserved you, when man could not."

"I will, I will try,—I do feel it."

He pressed her hand and was going, when she stopped him.

"I cannot thank you now as I should, for your kindness in coming to tell me this—but it was like you. And do not think," she continued, a deep blush stealing over her face, "that I regret what I have heard; it is better, much better as it is—and if . . . . if it humbles me the more, it is only what I deserve."

Never since the day of his broken vows had Ernest felt it so hard to compose himself—never so tempted to pour forth before her words of hopeless love, and too fond idolatry;—for the moment, so deceivable are the hearts of men, it seemed almost a duty to speak, it seemed as if *his* words of love could alone repair the humiliation another had caused her. His heart swelled with the conflict of his feeling.

But a habit of virtue, long and diligently

practised, comes at the call of the willing heart in moments of unusual temptation. The mist past from his eyes, and the veil of delusive duty dropped aside—then, with a deep sigh, mastering the easier temptation of impulse and inclination, he simply said, “It grieves me to hear you speak like that, you know it does;” and again calmly holding out his hand, he left her.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Just at that age when the painter would have wished to fix his likeness,—in the fair morning of his virtues, the full spring-blossom of his hopes ; just at that age hath death set the seal of eternity upon him, and the beautiful hath been made permanent.

SOUTHEY'S REMAINS OF KIRKE WHITE.

MONTHS flowed on, and summer came again, and the anniversary of the day which had hailed so proudly the dawn of a youthful life, came and passed in silence. Months flowed on, months of bodily pain and mental misery, till they guided a young sufferer to the gates of death.

Other eyes besides Ernest's began to observe the symptoms of an approaching end. They read it not only in the body's decline ; there were other signs ;—they read it in the eye that gleamed with no earthly fire—in the brow, from which the lines of pain and care, and even the expression of submission, had passed away—changed by



the lightening of a celestial peace. They read it in the mind, still clear, still vigorous, still aspiring,—but whose aspirings were for that land alone, where lofty aspirations attain their perfect satisfaction and repose.

“Months of bodily pain and mental misery.” The words are lightly said—and in their monotonous flow there is little on which the pen can dwell, or the tongue expatiate — yet as they pass they instil lessons of highest and holiest instruction; yet do they give a field for the exercise of the loftiest virtues—yet do they bear away with them a record which shall never be suffered to grow old.

There has often been a question, Which is the worst of mortal ills,—the pains of the body, or the strife of the mind? And while some of have given the palm of intensity to the first,—others, in excess of mental misery, have been found to declare the body’s pains unfelt. To Reginald both were sent. The fitful racking violence of agony—the dull gnawing restlessness of continual pain—and a will rising rebellious against his fate, and

a faith darkened and troubled by doubt and despair.

*Why* he was thus afflicted, those who watched over him, and saw his face almost as the face of an angel, could not but ask; and they could not at all times find an answer of unhesitating faith: yet an answer there ever is to be found. It is told that a suffering dying boy, once in extremity of anguish, looked up to the father who watched over him, and exclaimed, "Oh! father, how I suffer!" and the weeping father replied to him, not with words of sympathy, not with expressions of compassion and consolation, but with this assurance only: "Not one pang too many, my boy;" and the answer was sufficient. Yet in Reginald's case, other answers might be found. Gentle faults have gentle chastisements—faults on the surface can be blown away by the breath of a moist whistling wind—but there are faults, whose seat is in the spirit and the intellect, man's highest nature, and if these are to be burnt away, it must be by the iron entering even to the soul. And akin as

such 'faults may be to virtue of the highest kind — though in some forms they may shine as angels of light—yet all is a delusive show, for pride, even a lofty pride, is the reign of self, and not of God in the heart.

It was Reginald's natural and hereditary evil, and it was rooted like life itself in his nature. For this it was necessary that he should enter into the fire — for this it was needful that the furnace should be heated with sevenfold power: but when the work was done, he was at peace. From the burning fiery furnace, the life which had promised to shine so brightly on earth, came forth purified and fit for heaven; and even on earth the darkness passed away, and at eventime it was light.

For many months all hope of improvement had been given up: and from the moment when hope was set aside, there had seemed to be nothing left but to prepare for his death; yet when the words were spoken, and the conviction came that he must die, it came a startling shock. It was shortly after the anniversary of his birthday, that the

physician who attended Reginald, desired Ernest to prepare the afflicted family for his approaching end. The powers of life, he said, were wasting fast, and he could not answer for many days.

This was in June—yet in August he was living still ; and so strong is the sense of life in those who suffer, and in those who watch over suffering, that even the sight and feeling of mortal decay failed fully to impress either Reginald or those about him—and when the long awaited hour came, it came suddenly to him and to all.

Late one evening, Ernest left him clear in intellect, peaceful in mind, at rest in body—to all appearance as far from death as he had been for many weeks. Early in the morning, he was startled from his sleep by a hasty summons to the dying bed of the young lord.

He arrived at the Abbey, and entered the room adjoining Reginald's : many of the household were assembled there, with silent tears weeping over their young master's fate. The old housekeeper approached him as he

stood still, and desired him to enter—he had been, she said, anxiously expected, and was not too late.

He softly unclosed the half-shut door, and stood in the room and gazed around him. The shutters were all open, and the sun was shining in, flooding the room with its golden light—no sound was heard, no groan of pain or voice of lamentation—all was brightness, all seemed repose;—and yet what breaking hearts, what expiring hopes were there.

Reginald lay with closed eyes, his breathing soft and faint as an infant's, the expression of his countenance unutterable tranquillity. On the further side of his bed, leaning against his pillow, his mother watched over him,—all thought of self, all sense of being, even as it seemed all thought of sorrow, absorbed in the intense gaze of love, which rested on her son. Beside her, yet drawn a few paces backwards, sat Lord Vere, with closed eyes and folded arms. Months of suffering had blanched his hair, and softened and relaxed the stern expression of his countenance, yet now the mus-

cles were rigidly drawn together, as if the effort of the body would vanquish the anguish of the mind. At the foot of the bed, on the side nearest the door, Camilla half sat, half knelt,—her arms on the bed, her face concealed,—all fears and terrors, and the dread of death, in her, too, absorbed in thought of him for whom the summons was come.

Lord Vere raised his head on Ernest's entrance, and with a movement of his hand directed him to his son. Ernest approached the bed, and stooped over it, and softly pronounced Reginald's name. The dying eyes unclosed with a look of joy, and a smile played over the pale lips, then faintly murmuring, he desired to be left with Ernest alone.

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It is not in a tale like this that the scenes of a dying bed should be disclosed; over thoughts and hopes which rise to the eternal world, a veil in such a place should be drawn;—yet some there are, which speak of the departing spirit's relation to earth, and these may be detailed.



Once again profound quiet was in the room, the sacred services were over, the faint breathing was becoming fainter and more faint,—around the bed all sat again to see him die!

Suddenly there was a change,—on the threshold of existence the parting spirit seemed to pause,—and the Angel of Death, whose stroke for many hours had been at hand, appeared to draw backward.

Reginald unclosed his eyes, and with full and clear consciousness looked around him. He gazed long and fixedly at the three beings nearest and dearest to him on earth, but gazed in silence, no word was spoken,—it was a calm and silent farewell.

As his eyes rested on his young and sorrowing sister—as he saw the unspeakable sadness of her gaze—as he saw her head bowed again, unable to bear that mute intense farewell—a faint flush passed over his cheek, a faint cloud disturbed the stillness of his brow,—but still he said nothing—gave no parting advice, offered no last consolation, his eyes wandered on, and rested on another.



Beside the bed, leaning against his pillow, his face shrouded in his hand, sat Ernest de Grey ; in reflection so profound, that the change in the countenance of his expiring friend was unperceived by him. By many deathbeds he had been, and many partings he had seen, but never one that excited thoughts like this. He had seen the infirmities of age, the sorrows of poverty, the helplessness of childhood, pass from a world of trial to the hope of rest,—and he had seen them so pass with fearless and undoubting trust : but here was the light of life darkened ere yet it was fully day ; here was the flower of manhood cut down while its bloom was at its height ; here were beauty, genius, virtue bestowed, if earth were all, in vain ; running, if earth were all, to waste. He was shrinking, appalled at the faithless doubts that were sweeping over and agitating his soul, when he was roused by a touch on his arm, and turning startled to the bed, he met the gleaming, dying eyes of Reginald.

“ Ernest, dear Ernest,” he murmured, “ how shall I thank you for all you have done

for me in life and in death; my more than brother, how can I repay?"

Ernest stooped over him, and pressed his lips on his brow. "Pray for me," he said, in a voice low and tremulous from emotion, "that I may live as you have lived in the days of prosperity, and when death comes may die as you will die."

A blush passed over Reginald's pale cheek,—a blush, not of pride, but lowliness; but he said nothing,—some other thought appeared to occupy and possess his mind.

"Camilla, dearest Camilla, will *you* thank him for me?" thus was the stillness broken again, and the brother's earnest eyes rested on his sister's face.

She raised her head and gazed at him, and as she gazed, a tremulous movement shook her in every limb, and her cheek grew pale as death.

But the emotion was stilled; and suddenly bending her head, she placed her hand in his.

It was either a sign of acquiescence in his request, or an entire resignation of herself to his will.

There was yet a pause ; Reginald's colour deepened, and he turned an anxious inquiring gaze on his father.

Lord Vere bowed his head ; and the next moment the hand of Camilla was given to Ernest De Grey.

He had seen the movements as one turned to stone ; and colder than the cold hand that gave, was the hand that received the precious gift. Was it *then*, was it *thus*, was it *there*, that the dreams so madly indulged, so sinfully regretted, were to be realized ? For a moment he drew back from the prospects opening before him,—and the small passive hand lay immovable in his.

But a glance at the drooping, sorrowing form bending almost at his feet, brought higher and holier thoughts to his heart,—higher and holier even than humiliation, because less of self was there. To watch over *her* welfare,—to seek, whether fulfilled by him or by others, *her* happiness,—what need was there to shrink from this ? So rapid was the flight of thought, that none

but Camilla was aware that there had been a moment of hesitation before the guardianship was accepted. Silently and solemnly taking her hand in both of his, he pressed his lips upon it,—a token of the vow fervently made in his inmost heart to love and cherish her until death, or another's dearer right should part them;—unwilling then to disturb her at such a time with thoughts of him, he restored it to her.

The head that Reginald had slightly raised in his anxiety, fell back, and a glow of pleasure lighted his eyes; a moment he lay in repose, and then it was lighted again, and another thought flashed over the serenity of his countenance, and again it was to Ernest he turned:

“My day is passing like the clouds of evening, but it will rise again in you. Ernest, dear Ernest! not in my pride, but in my hopes, remember me. Those hopes . . .” He paused, looked upward, and raised his hand,—all earthly hopes and aspirings, cherished and unfulfilled, seemed gathering before his sparkling eye; all hopes of heaven

awaiting him,—but before they could be spoken, he was dead!—yet, as more than life could have done, his death had wrought in the hearts of all who approached him, so more than words those bright unspoken thoughts would do: they fell on Ernest's heart a light that none could darken,—a star, bright and unfailing, to guide him on his way. To the tumult so lately within him,—to the faithless doubts, the vague distrust, they gave an answer full and clear: “The light of such a life is not lit in vain.”

It was “the ruling passion strong in death.” Ernest saw the sudden change in his countenance,—the sudden fading of his colouring. He hastily rose, and whispering to Camilla, drew her to his place to receive the last gaze—the last sigh; then kneeling beside the bed, began the last prayer for the departing spirit.

## CHAPTER XIV.

I *will* rejoice—I do—though mortal eye  
Must still have lookings backward; yet 'tis best.  
The holiest verily are the sweetest thoughts.

THE VIRGIN WIDOW.

THE week following her brother's death was passed by Camilla in her room.

Total exhaustion of body and mind laid her prostrate; and lonely and dreary as were the sad and silent hours, that exhaustion perhaps was not unavailing in stilling her first and acutest sufferings. She was as yet unaccustomed to self-control,—as yet, in great measure, ignorant how to seek the highest sources of consolation; and though there were many such in store for her, they failed in those first hours in carrying comfort to her mind. The companion of her childhood, the friend of her youth,—him whom she had looked on as

born to carry by storm the world's applause,—was *dead*! On earth, he could share her thoughts, bless her eyes, draw upward her admiring gaze no more. She had pondered much on death,—she had, as she thought, prepared herself for the separation; but now death in its reality was come, and not even her dreadest, most fearful dream had realized what that separation would be. She endeavoured to follow him,—to picture a meeting in another world; but that world to her was distant, and awful, and unknown; and she fell back on the dreary present, not in faithlessness, but in ignorance and in dread.

She left her room, for the first time, on the day of her brother's funeral: her intense desire to follow him to the grave overcoming the exhaustion that had paralyzed her powers. There she stood with her father!—and there, by that grave, she and Ernest met again.

It had been Reginald's special request that Ernest should read the service over his head: and it was done; but at a cost



of suffering,—an agony of self-command,—which it is scarcely good that man should have to exert. As he consigned “earth to earth, and dust to dust,” the remains of him whom he had loved with more than a brother’s love, and saw drooping over the grave the form of her whose life and happiness were garnered in his heart, he felt as if the strings of life itself must burst in his effort to be calm. But it was done, and the cost to him was blessing to others; for the words of hope and consolation which came so full from his heart were carried to the hearts of all who heard.

The funeral was early in the morning; on the afternoon of the same day Ernest proceeded to the Abbey, to visit Camilla. It was no pain of selfish suspense which carried him to speak of love on such a day,—it was the desire to set for ever at rest those only thoughts and hopes which could separate and agitate them. Firm, full, and clear was the determination in his mind to renounce them *for ever*, unless she loved him; and by so for ever renouncing,

to make his promise of brotherly care and affection availing. He had seen her pale cheek, her trembling form, her fixed gaze on Reginald, but he had seen no eye turn on him,—felt no willing movement in her passive hand. These things had been scarcely heeded at the time, but they spoke to him now.

The feelings of his own heart led him to Reginald's room; and there, as he hoped, he found Camilla alone. All had been re-arranged,—all by her desire had been restored, as far as was possible, to the room of the old time, before the days of sorrow came. She was seated in the bow-window, her arms leaning on the window-sill,—in her deep mourning dress, looking so fair, so youthful, so sad, so much in need of one to love and cherish her, that Ernest's heart fluttered at the thought of renouncing his dearer right, and the calm resolution with which he had armed himself began to give way to an aching agitating fear.

He softly closed the door, and approached

her: "I thought I should find you here," he said, gently; "I hoped to find you here."

She looked up with a faint smile of welcome, but said nothing. She seemed to have been weeping, for her eyes were heavy and sad,—heavy, not swollen with tears; but it was over,—there was no agitation now, she was perfectly calm, strangely still.

"I am come to speak to you," Ernest said, "to say a very few words. Will it be painful to you to listen to me to-day?"

"I also wished to speak to you, Mr. De Grey," she replied.

He gazed at her intently. Her voice was low, but calm,—and no blush, not the faintest nor the softest, flitted over her cheek. Hope sank in his heart—hope for himself; but as it sank and died, such thoughts of her and her happiness arose as made him resolute again.

"It seems a strange place and a strange day," he began, with a tremulous voice, and tears shining in his clear eyes, "to speak

of hopes and cares of earth and earthly love; but those hopes are so bound up with him of whom all around us is full, that it was here I wished to speak of them once, perhaps only once again." He paused, then more agitatedly went on: "You know how once I dared to address you,—with what vain hopes and presumptuous words,—and you know how you answered me. They should have been—they were, set at rest, and never, never should have offended you again, but at his bidding; and though now at his bidding once again these words are said,—though once again I confess, that as I loved you then I ever have and ever shall love you, I do not speak as then I did,—the madness and selfishness that moved me at that hour is past. I have been taught—you know how we have both been taught—that our own selfish desires are not to be the rule and guide of our lives. You must not fear, therefore, to speak to me as you feel. I do not say,"—and his voice trembled as he said it,—“that you can cause me no grief; but

there are, there are indeed, other and higher thoughts in my mind,—and the best and highest, is the hope to be to you in place of him who has been taken from you. Will you then,” and he took her hand with grave and earnest tenderness in his, “look on me as a brother, and a brother only, and speak to me of all that is in your mind? If, indeed, if it be possible, that you can love me, as he hoped you might love, then . . . . . but if not, do not fear to speak,—rather fear to be silent, for even *his* wish must not mislead us from what is right. Believe me, it will be best and happiest . . . . .” He paused, thoroughly to weigh the words he was about to say,—then seriously, even solemnly repeated them: “Yes, *happiest* even for me to know all the truth;—there is no happiness where there is not perfect trust; and those who love as I do must also perfectly be loved.”

She had heard him till then in silence, and as if pondering intently on what he said; but at the last words she drew her hand away, and, turning from him in ex-

treme and trembling agitation, exclaimed, "It can never be! Reginald, even Reginald did not know me as you know. I am not.—you know I am not what I was. I am . . . " she paused, unable to proceed.

In the far distance Ernest saw his fading hopes and vanishing dreams, and closed his eyes to hide their fading from his sight; but so pure and perfect was his love for her,—so single and intense his desire for her happiness, that for an instant only his eyes fell on himself, and it was with scarcely an effort that he replied to her.

"Think of it no more. You know how little cause I had to hope, and therefore . . . "—the rest was not spoken, but with a hardly perceptible pause he hastened on. "Your brother's only wish was for your happiness,—and that he knew, however obtained, he might fearlessly intrust to me. Will you trust me as well? Will you believe?"—and, as he bent anxiously and tenderly towards her, there was not a shadow of a doubt of his own powers in the calm affection of his gaze,—“will you believe that



henceforward and *for ever*, I renounce all such thoughts and hopes as might cause restraint between us, and that never by word or sign shall they offend you more?"

She had once or twice endeavoured to interrupt him, and now looked up with so deep a blush, that a sudden hope bounded into Ernest's heart.

"Oh! Mr. De Grey, don't say offend — you cannot offend; it was not that I meant — it was my unworthiness. I have not thought of it as I should. To you," and, turning from him, she burst into tears, "to my dearest brother's dearest friend I would have given a perfect love, and such an untainted heart as your wife should bring—but I cannot, and you know I cannot. You have seen all my sinfulness, all my wanderings, and what can you do but despise?"

"Camilla," he said, softly and reproachfully, the first time ever his lips or even his thoughts had been so bold, as to call her by that name.

She looked up at him earnestly, anxiously. If his grave words, his calm manner, and



the remembrance of his hesitation, causing her more deeply to feel her unworthiness to be his wife, had made her almost doubt his willingness to receive her as such, — she could doubt no more.

“Can you indeed trust me, as if all the past had never been?”

“As I would have trusted him whom we have lost,” he said, solemnly. “When I speak of perfect love, and perfect trust, do not think I ask an impossible thing. Why should we shrink from speaking of the past? I know that what you have felt you do not feel, and perhaps never may feel again; but there are better things—perfect confidence and true affection, no regret for what is gone, and no doubt for the future. This is all I would ask, Camilla,—dearest—dearer, far dearer than when first I dared to speak—is there a hope that ever thus you can learn to love me?”

She raised her streaming eyes, and steadily and unshrinkingly placed her hand in his; and though no word was said, and no assurance given, even Ernest’s jealous fears for her happiness were satisfied.

## CHAPTER XV.

Time is Nature's faithful messenger,  
That brings up all we wish as well as all we fear.

DE FOE.

There are often calm fair days without storm, though it be  
not clear sunshine.

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

A. Oh! Lady, would the past had never been.

L. Not so! there is a lesson in the past,  
That nothing else can teach us.

"WELL, Edward, and so it's all over, I  
suppose."

"Yes, mother, all over;" and having so  
replied, Mr. Hervey sat down in silence in  
the window-seat of the little drawing-room.

"Well, Edward, don't be so short about  
it," Mrs. Hervey exclaimed, with some  
irritation, after waiting in vain for a further  
communication.

"There is not much to tell, mother," he

said ; an expression of unusual thought and feeling resting on his good but commonplace countenance ; “ though a good deal to think about.”

The usual position of the mother and son was for a short time reversed, and the new dignity of speaker sat as uneasily on Mr. Hervey, as the inferior position of listener did on his mother.

“ Plenty to tell, Edward, if you would but speak. Poor, sweet thing ! I would have given twenty pounds to be there — but it was not to be. Now tell me, Edward, was it as private as they wished ? ”

“ Yes, mother ; there was not a creature to be seen but Lord Vere and two or three of the maids and servants. Mrs. Mitford and old Herbert came down half an hour before the rest, to make sure there was no crowd. But they need not have been afraid. Mr. St. Maur was too much beloved—there’s not a soul would have set a foot outside the door, if it looked like disrespect to him.”

“ And poor Lady Vere — she couldn’t come, of course.

“No, mother ; as I told you, there was but Lord Vere. I inquired of Mrs. Mitford how Lady Vere was to-day, and she said there was no change. She said as you say, mother, ‘she never will hold up her head again.’ ”

“Never, Edward ; that I thought from the first. I saw her in the carriage the week after Mr. St. Maur died, and I tell you fifty years couldn’t have made such a change. She might have gone on young and beautiful to her dying day, if she had not found her heart. But when once those simple creatures,—for simple she was, Edward,—feel a thing in their hearts, it takes all their life away. She may linger on a while,—but she never will grow on the earth again. Well, well,—it was a heavy trial even to the strong, and it is no wonder the weak sink under it.”

“Heavy indeed, mother,” Mr. Hervey said, and he sighed. “Even to me the world is a changed place. I never was tired of watching that young St. Maur ; and proud as he once was, it made me watch him the more ; and I thought I should have

watched him till he stood as one of the great ones of the land. But now it's all over,"—and he fell into abstraction again.

There is no mind so dull and dry — none even so shallow and common-place — that has not, in some hidden corner, a note of music, a fount of higher and brighter feeling. If the chord can be found, it speaks. Mr. Hervey's had been touched this day, and he was unlike himself.

"Come, Edward, how was it all?" asked Mrs. Hervey, a little teased by her son's pensiveness. "Miss St. Maur came down with her father, I suppose?"

"Yes, mother; Lord Vere led her in, and Mr. De Grey followed, and they were not a moment waiting. I was glad to do it, mother. You know how proud I felt when Mr. De Grey told me I should be wanted; but when the time came, I should have been glad to have been spared. I felt it, mother, more than I ever felt anything before. That proud Lord Vere, so soft and so trembling; and that young lady, who used to be so gay and so thoughtless, looking as still and as sad as a crushed flower; and

the church, all fresh and bright — the work of *his* hands; and then the servants, all crying, and . . . .” Mr. Hervey paused, and looked out of the window.

“And was she in white, Edward, like a bride?”

“Yes, mother, she could not have worn her mourning, you know; — just in white, with a veil over her head — no flowers, nothing grand.”

“Poor, sweet young thing! She looked the very picture of Amy Mills, I’ll venture to say.”

“I don’t know, mother,” Mr. Hervey said, absently.

“No, indeed, Edward, how should you? for she died before I was married. But I can see her in her white veil, looking as like as could be to poor Amy Mills in her shroud. There was a strange likeness between them, there’s no doubt of that; and when she looked as gay as a young bird, it used to come over me and make me tremble, for I thought death must come and tame her . . . . Well, and so it has; she’s tame enough now, they say. Well,

well! No doubt, it's all for good; all the ways of God are good; but I would give a hundred golden guineas for one of her old smiles again. I used to feel them in my heart—they used to carry me back to my bright young days . . . but that might have been because of Amy Mills."

"Talking of likenesses, mother, do you observe how strangely like Mr. De Grey has grown of late to poor young St. Maur?"

"Mr. De Grey and Mr. St. Maur!" exclaimed Mrs. Hervey, putting on her spectacles to examine her son. "There's no more likeness between them than between me and Lady Vere, and that's not much. You have the strangest fancies, Edward."

This, by the way, was an extremely inappropriate observation of Mrs. Hervey's; for no one ever had fewer or simpler fancies than her son. The very word "fancy" expressed something far too original for his mind. He had plain reasons for his assertion now.

"I don't mean in point of feature, mother,—there is, of course, no change there; but there used to be a kind of inspired look



about Mr. St. Maur, and Mr. De Grey has it now. I have thought of it once or twice, when he has been preaching of late, and it struck me more particularly yesterday when he was talking to me of his future life; his eyes seemed to shine as if there were lights behind them, and he made me feel . . . . I don't know, mother, how it is, I have always liked Mr. De Grey,—none could but like him; but I never used to feel about him as I do now. I used to think of him as one of ourselves,—I never felt raised by his notice as I did with poor young St. Maur; but there is a change now. I like him as well; but I don't feel with him as I did. It is more like young St. Maur.

“Nay, Edward, there is no pride about Mr. De Grey, I am sure. He was here yesterday, as kind and as tender to me as if I had been his own mother, because he thought I might take the not going to his wedding amiss.”

“Oh no, mother, no pride; it was not that I meant. But it's no matter.” Mr. Hervey might have remarked with the Frenchman, “*Vous ne me comprenez pas.*”

*Cela m'est égal; je me comprends très bien moi-même."*

"Well, Edward, and then they went home to the Abbey, I suppose?" asked Mrs. Hervey, pursuing her catechism.

"No, mother. They went from the church-door to the old place at Evesham. Mrs. Mitford told me that it was Lord Vere's wish; he thought it best for Miss St. Maur."

"And how did she behave, poor thing? Did she bear up well?"

"She was very quiet, mother, at first, and followed me in a low sweet voice; and, though she looked very sad, I thought she seemed quite composed. But when the service was over, almost before she had risen from her knees, Lord Vere took her in his arms and kissed her,—and it upset her. I thought it ill-judged, though it affected me; for she could not recover herself again. She was crying very bitterly when she signed her name, and so she was the last I saw of her, as Mr. De Grey put her into the carriage."

"Poor thing! poor young thing!" sighed Mrs. Hervey, shaking her head, and taking off her spectacles to wipe them. "I don't

know how you feel, Edward, but these melancholy weddings don't please me. I hope it may all come to good."

"It must come to good, mother: there is no doubt but it will," Mr. Hervey said, with some vehemence.

"Well, Edward, I hope it may; if it was my own daughter, I could not wish it more. But old women will have fancies. She is but young to marry where she does not love; and I never thought she cared for Mr. De Grey,—never. I have said so a hundred times. Love was another kind of thing when I was young. And then this dismal wedding,—the sound of the funeral bells, I may say, still ringing in our ears,—for it is but three months since. Well, well,—God grant she may be happy."

"She *must* be happy, mother," Mr. Hervey exclaimed, and he started from his seat in some excitement as he spoke. "To be loved as he loves her must in itself be happiness. If you had heard his voice to-day, as he held her hand at the altar,—I don't know what, mother, it made me feel; but envy, I think, and . . . and then, if

you had seen him look at her,—his eyes, just bright with tears, as they often are,—making them shine the more, and resting on her so fondly and so tenderly,—it was like the look of a guardian angel, as if nothing should ever grieve her heart while he was near. No, mother, it is not foolish young love that makes people happy, but love like his. I don't care for your romantic tales."

"Well, well, Edward," Mrs. Hervey said, a little astonished at her son's excitement, "you may be right, after all; and if the wedding has not been as bright as wedding-days should be, I remember what I used to read long, long ago, 'Many a cloudy morning turns out a fine day.'"

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Gifted with his heart's desire—happy in the perfect love of one whom he so perfectly had loved,—restored to the possession of a loved and lost inheritance,—was there a danger that Ernest's heart would turn again to build its home, and lay up its treasures upon the earth?

Danger there must ever be—watchfulness

must be ever needed—for in St. Augustine's words, "It needs great virtue to struggle with happiness, and great happiness not to be overcome by happiness;" yet in truth his safeguards were many. There *are* lessons which the heart cannot forget—there are impressions which leave ineffaceable seals on the soul. The joy that comes after long trial, is like the sweetness of an autumnal day; sweet indeed, yet fuller of memory than of promise, and bearing even in its brightness a voice of warning sadness, which makes the joy of its presence a chastened one.

Ernest might have used—we may use for him—the beautiful concluding words of Silisco, in the Virgin Widow:—

Grace defend my heart!

That now it bound not back to what it was  
 In days of old—forgetting all that since  
 Has tried and tamed it. No, Rosalba, no.  
 Albeit yon waves be bright as on the day  
 When dancing to the shore from Procida  
 They brought me a new joy. Yet fear me not;  
 The joy falls now upon a heart prepared  
 By many a trouble, many a trial past,  
 And striking root, shall flourish and stand fast.

In the twofold character, the temporal as well as spiritual authority, with which already in a degree he is invested, and ere long circumstances will wholly invest him—influence of no ordinary kind is placed in his hands.

For his natural disposition the responsibility might have been too arduous, but he has been prepared for it now. Something of human imperfection may cling to him; failures on one side and the other be imputed to him; now his zeal may outrun his prudence; now earthly feeling cloud the clearness of his sight,—but these things, though occasionally they impede, cannot arrest his upward course.

His truth, his humility, his boundless charity, never fail—and where these qualities are taught by the wisdom of experience, guided by obedience to the declared laws of God, and submitted to His will, they are in very deed the links of that golden chain which draws many souls to Heaven.

THE END.

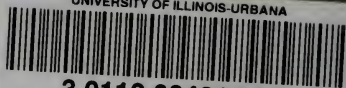








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